

Mara Jade Comic Unveiled • Terry Brooks to Write Novel Based on Episode I

STAR WARS

INSIDER



Meet the kid who grew up to become

Darth Vader



Photos from the
upcoming Star Wars film

An interview with
Doug Chiang, the man who
designs the new Star Wars

R2-D2 & Wicket
return for the prequels

An interview with prequel star
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Jake Lloyd: Child of the Force

Nine-year-old actor Jake Lloyd tells Scott Chernoff what it was like to take on one of the most famous roles in film history: the young Darth Vader.

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Terry Brooks: Sword of the Jedi

The world-famous fantasy author was just announced as the author of the Episode I novel. In this exclusive interview, Brooks tells Scott Chernoff how he expanded the *Star Wars* universe for the Episode I book.

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Kenny Baker & Warwick Davis

Two of the *Star Wars* universe's biggest stars tell the *Insider* about their triumphant returns to the *Star Wars* saga for Episode I.

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Doug Chiang: from Concept to Screen

Episode I's director of design tells David West Reynolds about the challenges of helping to create the look for the new generation of *Star Wars* films.

EVACUATE? IN OUR MOMENT OF TRIUMPH?

When I wrote an editorial about the importance of preserving the element of surprise in the *Star Wars* prequels back in *Star Wars Insider* Issue 35, I did not expect readers to agree with me so much that they would actually cancel their subscriptions!

Apparently—after what I'd written about not wanting to read the Episode I script even if I could, for fear of ruining the excitement of seeing the film fresh, without knowledge of the story—some of you have decided that our "Prequel Update with Rick McCallum" and the prequel photos we print are revealing too much. A couple of you feel strongly enough about it that you don't want to read the *Star Wars Insider* at all until the movie comes out. (See this issue's "Rebel Rumblings" letters column for proof.)

Whoa Nelly. Hold everything.

Let's not get carried away. As I promised in Issue 35's editorial, as the *Star Wars Insider* continues to preview Episode I over the next 9 months, we will not, I repeat not, be revealing major plot points in this magazine. We will be giving you photos, interviews, and a behind the scenes look at Episode I. This is a magazine by fans for fans. We don't want to reveal too much either.

But I don't think going stone-cold-turkey on prequel info is much better than having everything revealed. Look how the total secrecy strategy back-fired on *Godzilla* this year. By keeping the look of *Godzilla* absolutely secret until the movie came out in May, the producers unintentionally made the film a referendum on New *Godzilla* vs. Old *Godzilla*. If movie-goers had been able to see and get used to New *Godzilla* in the months before the movie came out, they could have gone into theaters more able to judge the movie on its merits. Instead all anyone talks about is whether they like New-Fast-Muscular *Godzilla* better than Old-Fat-Slow *Godzilla*.

If there were not a single shred of prequel info or images out there, I guarantee you that people would be going to see Episode I next

year and getting in fights about whether they like New Prequel *Star Wars* better than Old Classic *Star Wars*. As far as I'm concerned, let's get this baloney debate out of the way now, so we can all enjoy Episode I more next May.

Episode I is going to be 100% genuine *Star Wars*—and if you think that the little bit of it we've revealed in the *Insider* so far will ruin the surprise of the film, then, like my buddy Rob Halford said, "You've got another thing comin'."

Give George Lucas some credit. He's got a lot more tricks up his sleeve.

JON BRADLEY SNYDER
Editor-in-Chief

P.S. I want to welcome Scott Chernoff to the new position of managing editor. Scott is doing a great job of working hard, for you, the reader. Memo to Scott: breathe deeply and repeat after me, "Star Wars is my life." Good boy.

P.P.S. I am proud to announce our first joint editorial venture with *starwars.com*. This issue's terrific interview with Doug Chiang by David West Reynolds is continued on the Internet in the "Production Features" area of the Episode I section on *www.starwars.com*. Don't miss it—if you don't read it you've only gotten half the story.

P.P.P.S. (Sorry for all the P.S.'s, I've been reading the Wonder Column too much) Want to work for the *Insider*? We are looking to hire a Catalog Director, Internet Projects Coordinator, and Production Coordinator. If you have several years professional experience in any of the above position please send or fax your resume to: **Jon Bradley Snyder c/o Star Wars Insider, PO Box 111000, Aurora CO 80042, Fax (303)-574-9442.** No phone or e-mail inquiries please.

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The Wonder Column
Anthony Daniels will return next issue.

On the Cover

Darth Vader Double Vision.
A classic shot of Darth Vader, The Dark Lord of the Sith and, inset, a photo of Jake Lloyd as young Anakin Skywalker straight from the set of Episode I.

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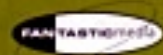
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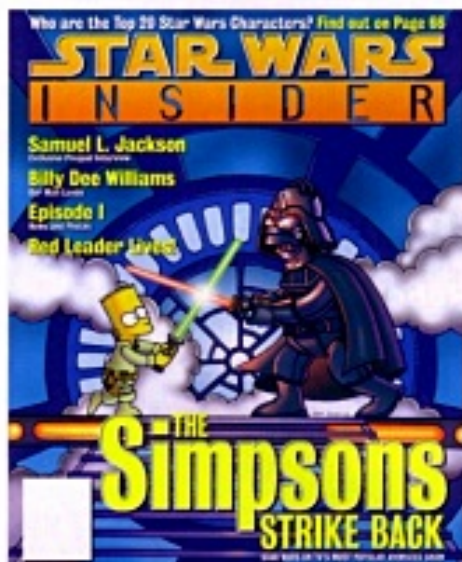
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rebel rumblings

Too Much Star Wars

I have been a club member since Issue One, and the club only gets better with age. Issue 38 ("The Simpsons Strike Back") was one of the best issues ever. I believe most fans appreciate the sophisticated and intelligent humor George Lucas brings to all of his films, and as comedy goes I think *The Simpsons* is on much the same level.

One thing has been bothering me lately, though. I think the club has been providing too much information regarding the new trilogy. When I noticed Issue 38 had a Samuel L. Jackson interview, I resolved not to read it so that I would not learn anything else new, thus spoiling one more surprise. What type of character might he play? One of Palpatine's minions? A competitor of Jabba's? A Bocce language tutor for the Young Queen? I decided only to look at the photos and wonder, when



do with the quality of your magazine! I actually think it's really cool! My beef with the magazine has to do with all of the information on the pre-

I love and care about *Star Wars* so very, very much that I can't read or see any pictures from the prequels because I don't want to ruin the surprise.

—ALBERT RICCI, San Angelo, TX

my eyes locked onto "...plays a Jedi Master..." in one of the captions. A photo in another recent issue told me in full color that Anakin and his family own R2-D2. The club's shroud of secrecy surrounding *Indiana Jones* and *The Last Crusade* seemed more intense.

Mr. Lucas has near-SWAT team security in place on his sets for a reason: to keep the fans in the dark—to preserve the magic and surprise of the *Star Wars* experience. I already know more than I should. We all do. What if we had known in advance that Han would be frozen in carbonite? Or that Vader would escape the first Death Star? Or that Yoda would die? I love the club, the magazine, and the text portions of Prequel Update with Rick McCallum (who is a master of not revealing crucial story details). But as far as pictures and interviews, sometimes less is more. Just a thought from a humble fan.

ANDREW HENDERSON Lakewood, CO

quels. I love and care about *Star Wars* so very, very much that I can't read or see any pictures from the prequels because I don't want to ruin the surprise!

I realize that I could just skip the pages that talk about and show pictures from the prequels, but do you realize how difficult that is? I just don't have that kind of willpower! I also realize that you could show countless more things than you already have about the prequels, and you still wouldn't even scratch the surface, probably. But that too is something I feel is just too risky. I think that the prequels are going to be great and believe you me, I can't wait for them! But seeing all of this stuff about them is really disenchanting to me, so I hope you understand why I can no longer continue to subscribe to your magazine. I do, however, wish you guys and gals at the *Insider* all the luck in the world.

ALBERT RICCI San Angelo, TX

I have received a letter in the mail a couple times from you requesting me to re-subscribe to your magazine. I don't intend to, and I'd like to tell you why. It is certainly nothing personal, and it really doesn't have anything to

Albert and Andrew, I sympathize with your plight—with more and more prequel information in the *Insider*, it could get tricky to avoid discovering what you don't want to know (and this issue is not going to help matters any). Still, as

Why anyone in their right mind **would choose Han Solo** over the overwhelmingly awesome Luke Skywalker is simply **inconceivable to me.**

—TASHA VAN GARSE, Sycamore, IL



you said, what you can find in our pages is just the tip of the proverbial prequel iceberg, and you might be surprised at how much Lucasfilm has managed to keep under wraps. Remember that all of the information we print about the prequels is approved and authorized by Lucasfilm. Still, if you need to go into a *Star Wars Insider* hibernation until Episode I's release next year, I understand—but you might want to consider holding onto your subscription so you can go back and read all about Episode I after you've seen it. (Presumably, if you're reading this, that's what you've done.) Here's one more letter from somebody who's canceling his subscription because of all the prequel info...

I will get straight to the point. When I joined your fan club back in 1993, I joined it because I was not only a fan of *Star Wars* but also Indiana Jones and other Lucas films like *American Graffiti* and *THX 1138*. When I joined, I would luxuriate in reading your magazine because not only did it inform me of the latest info on the *Star Wars* prequels, but it also informed me of the Indiana Jones movies and TV shows and other Lucasfilm divisions like ILM, THX, Skywalker Sound and LucasArts. I did not care that there was a lot more on *Star Wars*, because I realized most of the people reading your magazine were *Star Wars* fans.

Then in Issue 23, you changed the name to *Star Wars Insider*. I did not mind this because you explained your reason in a letter from Dan Madsen, president of the Fan Club. In the letter, he said that even though you had changed the magazine in many respects, you would still cover the fourth Indiana Jones movie and other Lucasfilm projects. This I was pleased to hear.

Issue 32 was the last time you reported on any Lucasfilm projects other than *Star Wars*. In the latest issue I have received, Issue 37, the only non-*Star Wars* items are an advertisement for two pathetic Indiana Jones items in the Jawa Trader and a Lucasfilm book on the inside back cover. Wow, what a plethora of non-*Star Wars* articles you have promised and delivered.

This is not the fan club I joined, and not the magazine I re-subscribed to for a further five years in 1996. Instead of reading your mag-

azine cover-to-cover, I flick through it now like a tabloid magazine in a doctor's waiting room. Let me commend you all at *Star Wars Insider* on the great job you have done in ruining what was a great read. I know I will not be continuing my membership in 2001.

DYLAN YOUNG Balgowsah, Australia

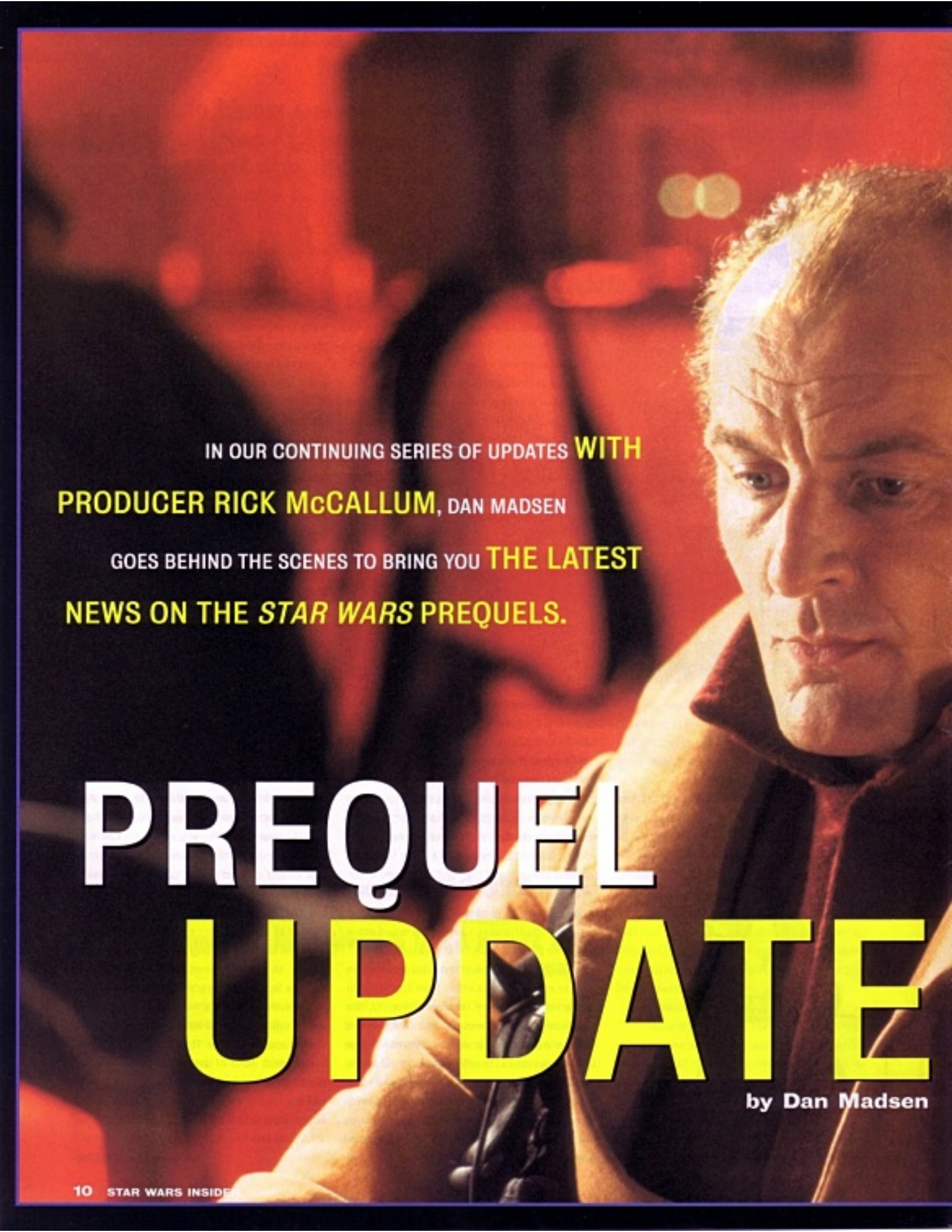
Ouch. Well, we'll miss you, Dylan, and I'm sorry we don't have any Indiana Jones news to report—we're all big Indy fans here at the Insider. The reason we haven't devoted much space to Indy or other Lucasfilm news is simply because, at this time, Lucasfilm is focused completely on Episode I of the new *Star Wars* trilogy. In Issue 38, Dan Madsen asked *Star Wars* producer Rick McCallum, "Are there any other projects Lucasfilm is working on now besides *Star Wars*, like another Indiana Jones film?" Rick replied, "There is nothing else but *Star Wars* right now." So I hope you hang in there, Dylan—maybe by 2001 we'll have some good news to report. You can be sure that if a new Indy film goes into production, we will cover it extensively.

Poll Position

Please tell me that the results of the Top 20 *Star Wars* Characters Poll were a joke! There is no way that Mara Jade should be Number 20. Why anyone's favorite *Star Wars* character would be one dreamed up by a novelist is beyond me. Any real *Star Wars* fan realizes that only the films count, with the heroes and villains created by Mr. Lucas and his team of artists. Everything appearing in the books is based on others' visions, and should not be treated as real *Star Wars* events or characters.

I'm tired of reading about all the insane things that have been happening to my favorite *Star Wars* characters. Tales such as Han Solo having three kids who are training to be Jedi Knights, or IG-88 becoming the brain of the second Death Star. That is just plain stupid. In my mind, none of these events happened. I personally have no idea what occurs after Jedi, nor do I want to read a writer's description, either. I am sick of all the fans who accept it as

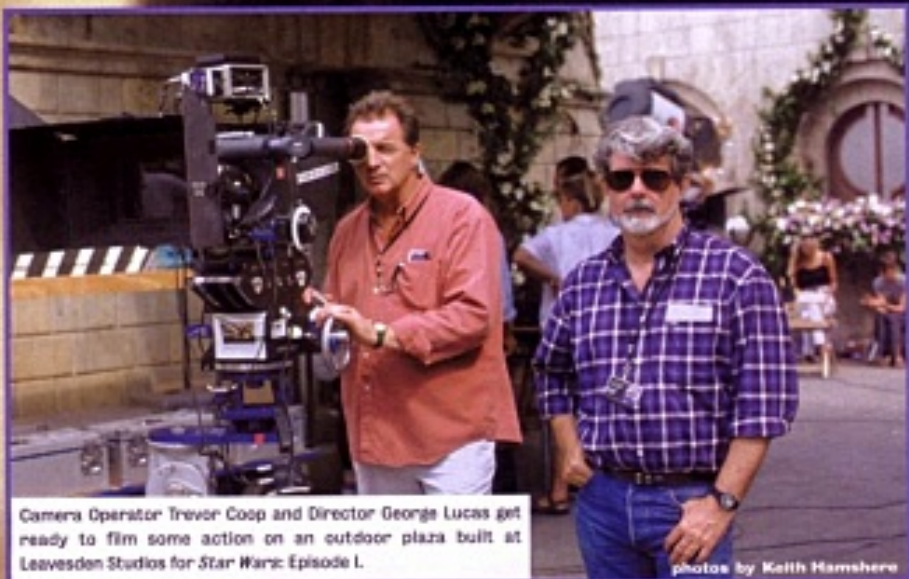
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NEWS ON THE *STAR WARS* PREQUELS.

PREQUEL UPDATE

by Dan Madsen



Camera Operator Trevor Coop and Director George Lucas get ready to film some action on an outdoor plaza built at Leavesden Studios for *Star Wars: Episode I*.

photos by Keith Hamshire

George Lucas announced recently that Boba Fett would have a prominent part in Episode II. What do you know about this?

He is definitely going to play a part in Episode II. There's not much else I can tell you about Episode II, since George will not sit down to start writing it until this summer.

Boba Fett is such a popular character. Did George decide to put him into Episode II because of that?

No, George would never do it for popular reasons. There's a real story point for Boba Fett and that's why he's going to appear in the second film.

Will R2-D2 and C-3PO carry on to the next film?

R2-D2 will be there for sure. I suspect that C-3PO will be there as well.

What's happening on the ILM front?

ILM is continuing to weave its extraordinary magic. They are doing the most phenomenal job. They have the most ruthless and relentless schedule ahead of them. But so far their spirits are very high and everybody is working incredibly hard. The quality is so extremely good that it is mind-boggling. George and I look at each

other once a week and can't believe how great they are all working together and what a magnificent job they are doing. It is just extraordinary work.

What went into the decision to give the distribution rights for the prequels to 20th Century Fox again?

George made a commitment years ago that whatever happened, when he was ready to start negotiating, that he would give Fox the first opportunity. He laid out all the issues that were important to him, and they didn't have a problem with any of it. It seemed like the natural place to go for the prequels. We had a great relationship with them on the *Special Edition*. There are a lot of extraordinary people at Fox who we've come to know over the last three or four years. They are easy to deal with and communicate with, and they have a great marketing and distribution team.

When do you tentatively plan on shooting Episode II?

Not until the end of 2000. >>

Ric Olié (actor Ralph Brown) sits at the helm of an exotic spacecraft, ready to pass on important skills to young Anakin Skywalker in *Star Wars: Episode I*.

Two citizens of the young queen's planet got ready to film a scene on location at the Caserta Royal Palace in Italy.



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THESE CHARACTERS ARE SEAMLESS!

Is there a tentative release date for Episode II?

No, not at this time.

What do you think is going to be the biggest difference between Episode I and Episode II?

I think the tone will be very different—it will be darker in Episode II. The characters will be older as well.

How is the casting going for the elder Anakin Skywalker?

We haven't started that yet.

What is the most complicated type of effect that ILM is undertaking for Episode I?

The real main focus and direction is character animation. That is really where the most challenging and difficult aspects are. There are so many different areas that are complex and difficult. But I think the character animation is the most extraordinary place of incredible innovation. I mean, these characters are seamless! They are there! There is no question that they are not real characters and real things that exist. They can hold their own with any actor.

How much more shooting is left for Episode I?

About four or five days in the fall.

Is this film being clearly designed for a family audience? Do you foresee that this will appeal to the same young crowd that loved the original film, or is it going to reach an older audience?

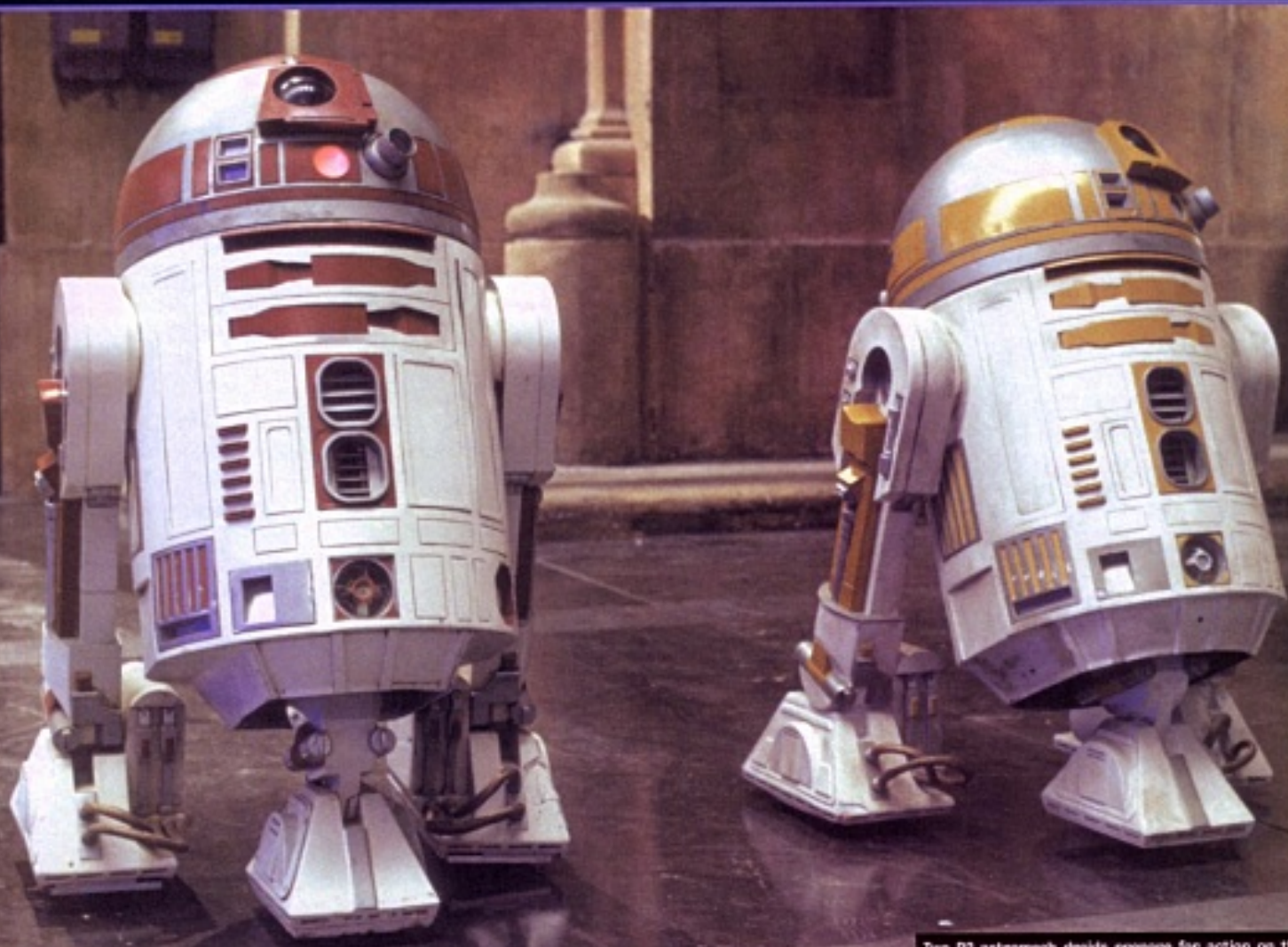


photo by Giles Kayle

Two R2 astromech droids prepare for action on the main hangar set on Stage A at Leavesden Studios outside London.

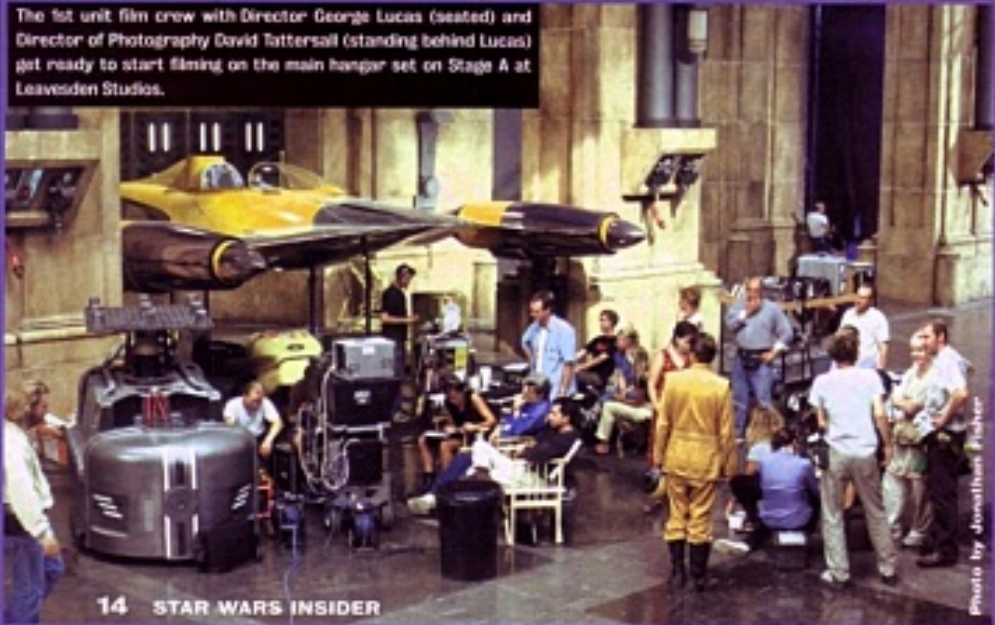


"Hey dad, now I get a chance to play with him!" Nathan Hamill, son of actor Mark Hamill, gives R2-D2 a fond embrace on a visit to Leavesden Studios. Nathan is also an extra for *Star Wars: Episode I*.

A carpenter works on one of the doorways on the set of the interior of a large starship built at Leavesden Studios for *Star Wars: Episode I*.



The 1st unit film crew with Director George Lucas (seated) and Director of Photography David Tattersall (standing behind Lucas) get ready to start filming on the main hangar set on Stage A at Leavesden Studios.



What are some of your favorite films and who are some of your favorite directors?

I love European films. They deal with much more complex characters, in my opinion. My favorite film is *Persona* by Ingmar Bergman. I've seen that film 50 or 60 times. But, I must say, I love American films, too. I love popcorn films. I always try and see between three and five films a week. I cannot go to bed without seeing a movie. I have a huge laserdisc collection—about 1,400 films. I try and see every-



Two set builders take great care to fit a newly-built view-screen prop into a passageway at Italy's Caserta Royal Palace, which was "dressed" as the young queen's palace on a far-away planet.

thing that opens that interests me. I don't get to go out and see as many films when they open as I wish because of my work, but I try and catch up with anything that interests me once it hits on video or laserdisc. I have people all over Europe who send tapes of the films that don't come to the U.S. It helps me unwind from my day when I go home and watch a film at night before going to bed.

Do you ever feel stressed because of the high anticipation there is for the new *Star Wars* movie?

It actually hasn't stressed me out on that level. Everybody is just trying to make the best movie they can. We're in a situation where you can't blame anybody if it doesn't work. Everybody is just working at the highest pitch and doing their best work to serve George's idea of the story. I know exactly what I am going to do the day the film opens—I'm going to leave the country. I did that on the *Special Edition*. I like to get away and relax. I have bought up a whole bunch of property in eastern Europe just in case it doesn't work! (Laughter)

I think it will be a long time before you will need to utilize that property for your home!

I think you're right.

Thanks again, Rick, for updating us.

It is always my pleasure. ☺

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"Millennium Falcon" by award-winning cinematic artist, Sonia Hillios, is the premiere issue in the exciting new series entitled, the Star Wars Space Vehicles Plate Collection. Each edition features an awe-inspiring scene portraying the legendary vehicles of the Star Wars trilogy. These exclusive, Hamilton Collection originals are officially authorized by Lucasfilm Ltd., and are offered for the first time ever in this series of fine porcelain collector plates.

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WALKING THE DROID

DON BIES MAKES R2-D2 MOVE

Kenny Baker, the man inside R2-D2's machinery for all of the *Star Wars* features, isn't the only talented artist who brings the lovable droid to life in *Star Wars: Episode I*. Off-camera, the man often working Artoo's remote controls is his trusty operator, Don Bies.

Bies has had a long relationship with Artoo. For the past decade, he has operated the little fellow (using a radio control) whenever Artoo is called upon to make personal appearances at such events as conventions, premiere screenings, and commercials.

For Episode I, Bies had the honor of operating Artoo for some scenes during production at London's Leavesden Studios, while Peter Hutchinson supervised Artoo for most of the Tatooine scenes in Tunisia. Bies told the *Insider* he was thrilled to work on the film, which marked his first time operating Artoo for a *Star Wars* feature. Along with fellow R2-D2 operators Grant Imahara and Nelson Hall, and a crew of seven at ILM's model shop, Bies also created a new Artoo model, one that would better travel along uneven terrain or through narrow passageways.

"The problem was that the crew was pushing the technology of what Artoo could do, just by the very nature of how he's built and constructed," Bies explained. "The solution came down that we would build a new one that could go over any surface, especially uneven or irregular terrain, like sand. So we made some modifications to the original construction and improved some of the materials, and created a new Artoo."

While the new and improved R2-D2 looks almost exactly the same as his predecessor, a number of improvements were made to the interior construction of the droid. "The radio controls are better," Bies said. "Things like speed controls that operate the motor, and the motor itself, are far better. However, the basic shape and exterior design on Artoo hasn't changed. And we were limited by that design. If we were to design Artoo today, knowing everything that he had to do, we probably wouldn't have put him in this configuration. He would have looked slightly different just to

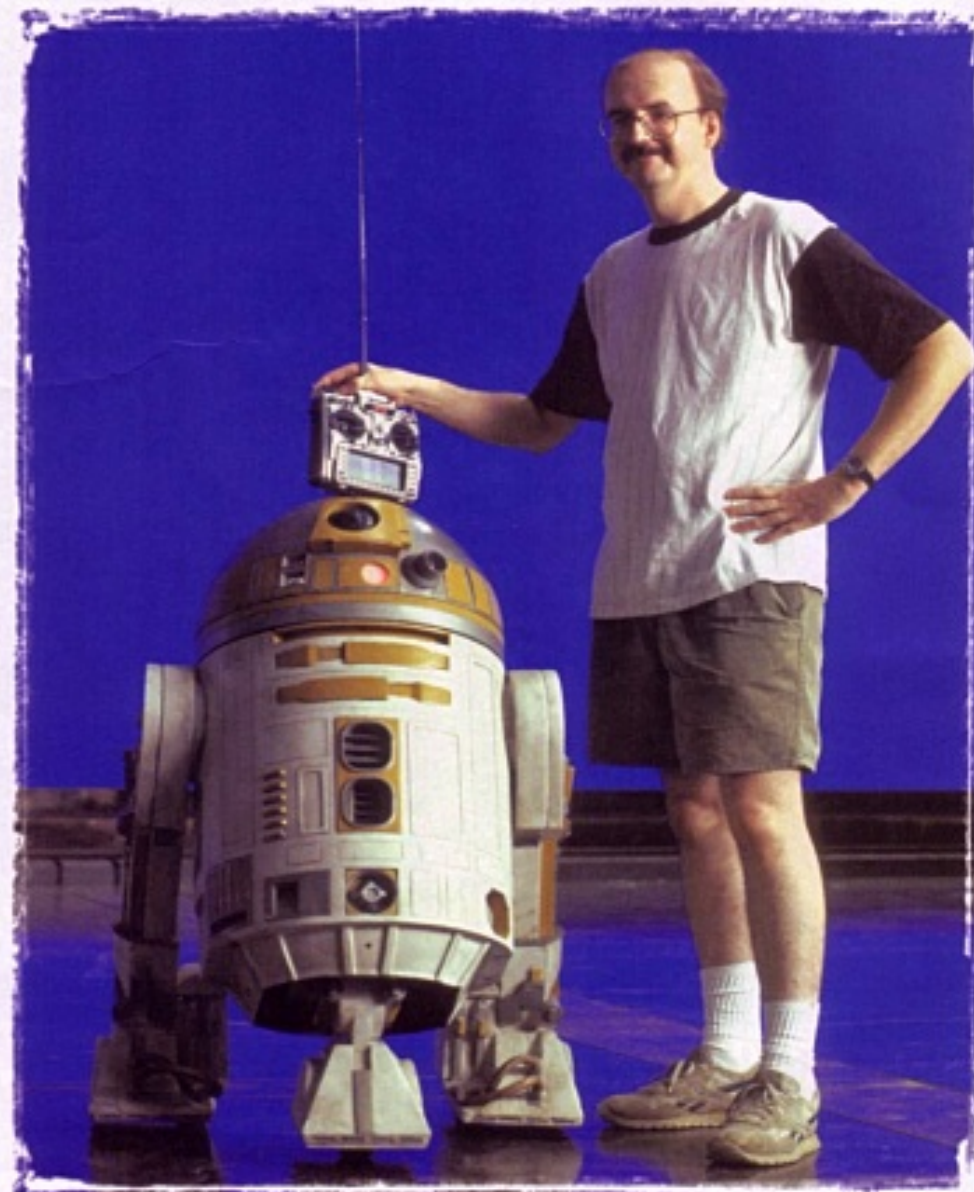


photo by Giles Keyte

"...We made some modifications to the original construction and improved some of the materials, and created a new Artoo."

make it work better."

To avoid problems that might arise on the sets of Episode I, multiple models of Artoo were built, so that if one were to break down, another could replace it immediately. One droid model was built in California by ILM, and many other

models were built by the special effects artists in London.

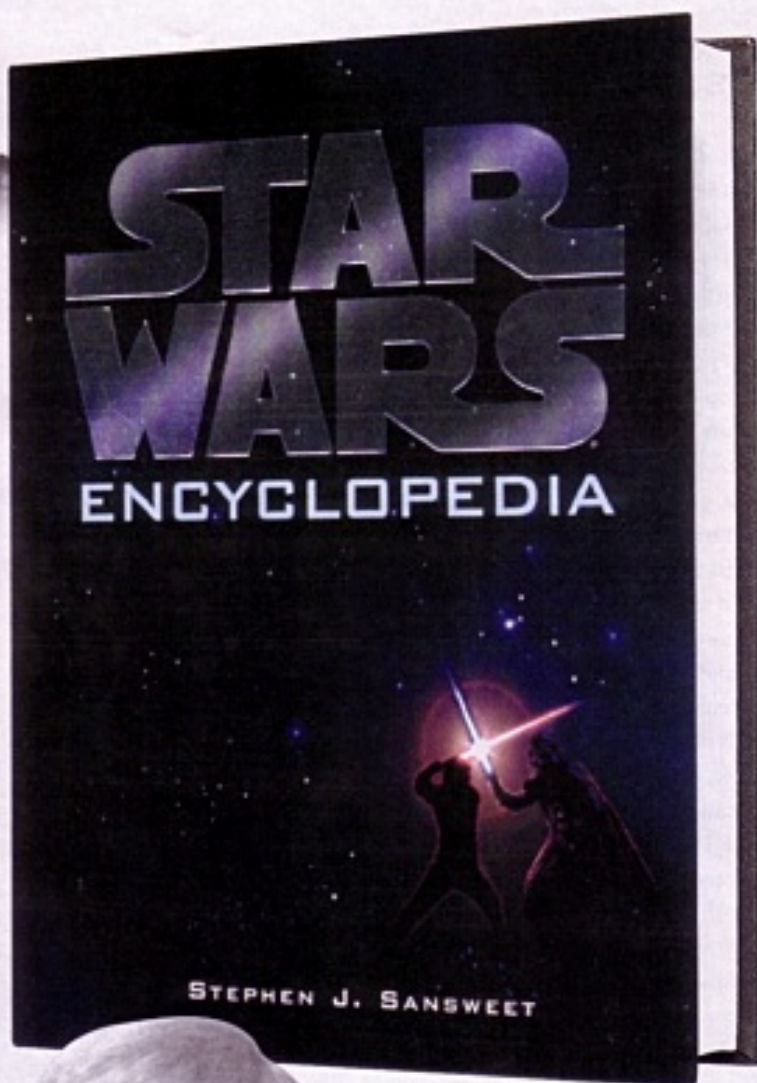
The ILM crew also changed the motors used inside the astromech droid, so that he could move more easily across difficult terrain.

» continued on page 81



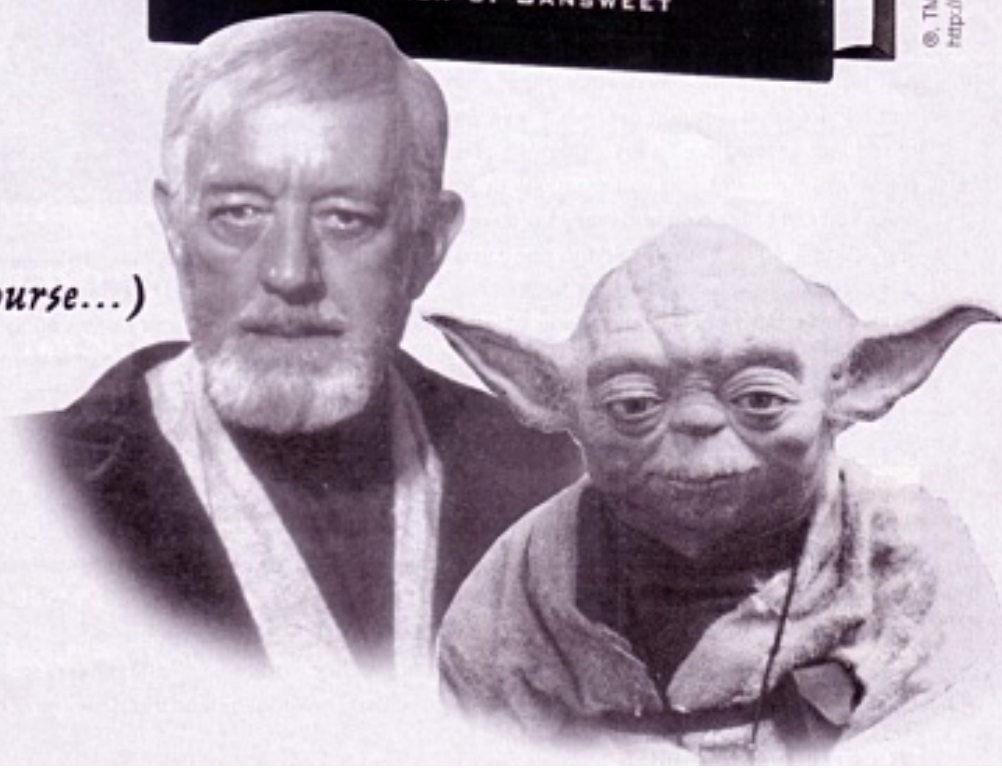
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CAROLINE BLAKISTON

GYPSY MOTHMA

by Scott Chernoff

It's kind of ironic that even though Mon Mothma is the experienced, all-knowing leader of the Rebel Alliance, Caroline Blakiston really knew absolutely nothing about the story of *Star Wars* when she played Mon Mothma so memorably in *Return of the Jedi*.

"At the time, I hadn't actually seen the previous two films," Blakiston told the *Insider* recently. "All I knew was I was joining a moving staircase, something that was absolutely huge and a great, vast success. But I didn't understand exactly the details of it. When the script arrived, it was one or two pages, which I had to swear to secrecy and then give back afterwards—and when I got there, they changed my lines. And it was hard material to learn in the first place!"

Yet the veteran, British-born stage actress, who trained with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and just spent four years with the Royal Shakespeare Company, was instantly accepted by audiences as Leia and Luke's boss, even though she is not seen until the third installment of the trilogy, and even then for just one brief scene.

"When the film came out, we timed how long I was on the screen, and it was 27 and a half seconds," Blakiston said, adding that she embroidered that very number on her *Revenge of the Jedi* production T-shirt. "There's not a tremendous amount that you can do with 10 lines. You can only go on and really say it with conviction—'Many Bothans died to bring you this information.' That line comes back at me all the time, but nobody can tell me who or what a Bothan is!"

Looking back on her character lecturing Han, Lando, Wedge, and all the other pilots, Blakiston said, "She's calm, and she looks in charge. I wasn't calm when I did it. I was very nervous, because I was given all these new lines to learn, and I like lines to be inside me for a long time, so that I can really re-invent them when I'm speaking, as if I've just thought of them."

"Plus," she continued, "I wasn't there all through the film. These were my two days, and I



was there with all the guys who were playing all the huge parts, sitting and listening to me. I had that great nervousness, and I had trouble getting my voice out. I think they had real trouble hearing me. Harrison Ford came and sat down beside me and just chatted a bit. Maybe he wanted to hear if I had a voice at all," she said, adding, "He couldn't have been nicer. And Carrie Fisher—I remember saying to her, 'You're all over my daughter's pajamas,' which she was."

The actress, who is accustomed to belting out Shakespearean monologues onstage night after night, said she has always suspected that her sudden stage fright may have been

the reason why director Richard Marquand summoned her back to re-dub her speech. "Richard Marquand very nicely said there were pigeons on the roof of the building and they were interfering with the sound," she recalled. "That may have been a nice way of saying, 'We just couldn't hear you.'"

Still, Blakiston said she has nothing but fond memories of her two days on the *Jedi* set, calling Marquand "entirely charming and adorable" and co-star Kenny Baker (R2-D2) "one of the most adorable, gorgeous people—oh, God, he's funny, he's wonderful!"

Her infectious enthusiasm was apparent



'Many Bothans died to bring you this information.'
That line comes back at me **all the time,**
but nobody can tell me who or what a Bothan is.



I love mythology, and [the *Star Wars* films] became more their own myths in a way. They went on their own journey through the light and the dark. I'll be really interested to see the prequels.

when Blakiston recalled getting a sneak peek at a top-secret new special effect. "I remember particularly," she said, excited, "being allowed to look at—who was old fatty who sat down here?—Jabba the Hutt! I was told you can't go there, and then somebody said, 'Well all right, come with me and I'll show you secretly, but you mustn't say anything.' So I was allowed to go and have a look."

Never before had she been involved in a project with that level of secrecy, except, Blakiston said, "when I had a job at the United Nations and I signed the Official Secrets Act. Seriously, no, I don't think, ever—and I did work at the UN." Although she never really did sign any top-secret diplomatic documents, Blakiston did spend one year as the social secretary to the wife of the British delegate to the United Nations. "It was an amazing job," she said, "an extraordinary year."

But even though she would go on to fame playing an intergalactic dignitary in *Return of the Jedi*, Blakiston left the real world of diplomacy to study acting. She quickly found work on the repertory stage, and eventually made her way to London's West End, as well as the Russian stage. Guest appearances on television shows like *The Avengers* and *The Saint* soon followed, as well roles in films such as *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* (1971), and the Peter Sellers-Ringo Starr comedy, *The Magic Christian*, in which she played Sellers' sister.

Since acting in *Jedi*, Blakiston—whose two children have grown and who splits her time between visits to Moscow and homes in London and off the English Channel—has made a handful of film and television appearances, most notably the 1987 movie *The Fourth Protocol* (with Julian Glover, *Empire Strikes Back*'s General Veers). For the most part, she's concentrated on the stage and her one-woman show, *Black Bread and Cucumber*. "I have two stories to tell about being in *The Cherry Orchard* in Moscow in Russian," she said of the show. "I perform that any opportunity I can, and that's a great joy, because when it's your own work, it feels very special and spectacular."

Being embraced by *Star Wars* fans the world over is also, Blakiston said, pretty special and spectacular. "Letters come from all over, a steady trickle," she said, adding that she usually responds to her fans. "So many of them have a story of their own, a hardship story, or they're raising money for charity, or they just say, 'Star Wars means so much to me.' If somebody writes that, I'm inclined to believe them."

Recently, Blakiston has been getting even closer to fans by attending numerous *Star Wars* fan conventions. "Oh, they're great fun," she enthused. "They're something so bonus, over and above being in the movie. I love the States, and I love the opportunity to come across. There's something wonderful about the U.S.—the friendliness, I love it."

In fact, Blakiston said fans at conventions helped her realize just how strong an impression she made as Mon Mothma. "It wasn't until I went to a convention that I understood the enormity of the films. I discovered that Mon Mothma, who had been this one-speech character, actually turns out to be much more important than I understood because she'd been the leader of the Rebels. All these books were written afterwards in which she figured quite strongly." Indeed, Mothma looms large over the *Star Wars* book universe, with a background as the only Senator of the Old Republic to openly oppose the evil Palpatine — "none of which I knew until I went to the conventions," Blakiston said.

Just listening to Blakiston talk about meeting her fans, one can still picture her in her rebellious white robes, issuing a grand statement even when she's just talking about fans who want a Mon Mothma action figure (a request that has finally been granted). "Every year," she stated, "they say, 'Why isn't there a model? Why don't you have a figure?' That's obviously been a sadness for the people that collect those."

In the more than 15 years since she first teamed up with Admiral Ackbar and General Madine to explain exactly how the Rebels were going to rid the galaxy of the Empire once and for all, Blakiston has come a long way in her knowledge of the *Star Wars* universe. Of course, she has by now seen all three movies many times, and found herself glad she got on board. "I thought they got better as they went along," she said. "I love mythology, and they became more their own myths in a way. They went on their own journey through the light and the dark. I'll be really interested to see the prequels."

In fact, with those three prequels on the way, and 15 years of distance between shooting *Jedi* and the release of its *Special Edition*, Caroline Blakiston now finds herself a veteran of the *Star Wars* saga—and a long way off from that day in 1982 when she had no idea of the implications of her speech to the Rebel troops.

"At the time, it was fun to join something that other people had already been a part of and that was already a huge success," she marveled. "Now, I am a part of it. It's absolutely staggering!" ☺

Got a favorite Star Wars supporting actor you'd like to see interviewed? E-mail your suggestions to Scott Chernoff in the Star Wars Universe: SWuniverse@aol.com. All e-mails are read, but individual responses are unfortunately not possible due to time constraints.



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STAR SIGHTINGS

EWAN MCGREGOR (Episode I's Obi-Wan Kenobi) will hit the London stage this fall when he stars in a production of playwright David Halliwell's *Little Malcolm and His Struggle*—to be directed by his uncle, **DENIS LAWSON**, who played Wedge Antilles in the original *Star Wars* trilogy. The play runs Nov. 18 through Dec. 23 at the Hampstead Theatre...

Meanwhile, McGregor and Lawson can both be seen in multiple upcoming projects. McGregor stars in the upcoming films *Velvet Goldmine*, a rock epic from acclaimed director Todd Haynes (*Safe*), and *Eye of the Beholder* with Ashley Judd... Ewan's uncle Denis stars in two upcoming British television miniseries, *The Ambassador* and *The Round Tower*...

HARRISON FORD (Han Solo) is scheduled to star with Kristin Scott Thomas in director Sydney Pollack's romance *Random Hearts*. Ford and Thomas had been planning to appear together in the drama *The Age of Aquarius*, but switched to *Random Hearts* when

Aquarius was put on hold due to budgetary concerns... Ford also participates in *The Emperor's New Clothes: An All-Star Illustrated Retelling of the Classic Fairy Tale*, a CD and book to benefit Steven Spielberg's Starbright Foundation. The project—which features one-page chapters written and read by the likes of Ford, Robin Williams, Angela Lansbury and the *Star Wars* radio drama's Yoda, **JOHN LITHGOW**—is due October 22...

MARK HAMILL (Luke Skywalker) recently wrapped the Swedish film *Hamilton*, in which he co-starred with Peter Stormare (*Fargo*, *The Lost World*). The Rebel hero also lent his voice to the animated movie *Sinbad: Beyond the Veil of Mists*, which also features the voices of Leonard Nimoy, Brendan Fraser, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*'s John Rhys-Davies... **JAMES EARL JONES** (Darth Vader's voice) just wrapped an appearance in the CD-ROM game *Rising Sun*...

NATALIE PORTMAN (Episode I's

Young Queen) co-stars with Susan Sarandon in the live-action drama *Anywhere but Here*...

FRANK OZ (Yoda) directs the Steve Martin-Eddie Murphy comedy *Bofinger's Big Thing*, from a script by Martin... **TERENCE STAMP** (Episode I) appears in *Kiss the Sky* with Sheryl Lee (*Twin Peaks*)... Episode I actor **SAMUEL L. JACKSON** stars with Kevin Spacey in *The Negotiator*...

JOE JOHNSTON, who worked in different technical capacities on all three original *Star Wars* films and the two Ewok telefilms, directs Laura Dern in *Rocket Boys* (no, it's not a sequel to his *Rocketeer*)... *Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* screenwriter **LAWRENCE KASDAN** directs Ted Danson and Martin Short in the comedy *Mumford* and executive-produces Drew Barrymore and Robin Williams in *Home Fries*... *Star Wars* composer **JOHN WILLIAMS** scores Steven Spielberg's late-summer release, *Saving Private Ryan*.

DON HENDERSON 1933-1997

The *Star Wars Insider* was saddened to learn of the death of Don Henderson, the actor who played Commander Tagge in *Star Wars*. Henderson, a veteran of many popular films, television series, and stage plays, died June 22, 1997, in London, of cancer.

Although it has now been a year since his death, the *Insider* still wishes to honor and acknowledge Henderson's contribution to the *Star Wars* universe. As Tagge, the Imperial leader who refuses to underestimate the potential of the growing Rebellion, Henderson convincingly and succinctly represented the Empire's establishment leadership, providing a stark contrast to Darth Vader's style of rule.

The actor lent a very real sense of urgency to his delivery of famous lines like "That's impossible—how will the Emperor maintain control without the bureaucracy?" and "Until this battle station is fully operational, we are

vulnerable. The Rebel Alliance is too well equipped. They're more dangerous than you realize."

Born in 1933 in Leytonstone, on the north coast of London, Henderson, whose father was a carpenter, didn't take up acting until he was 32, when he accepted a dare from a friend to audition for the prestigious Royal Shakespeare Festival. The audition resulted in a six year stint with the famous theater company, during which he appeared in plays like *MacBeth*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Henry VI*, and *Peer Gynt*.

Henderson's film work earned him two nominations for the British version of the Oscars, the BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) awards. Following his film debut in a 1968 adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Henderson went on to act in numerous films, including *The Island* (1979), *The Trial* (1993), *Brazil* (1985), and *The Ghoul* (1975), in which he played the title char-

acter. He also appeared with a fellow *Star Wars* alum, the late Jack Purvis, in 1989's *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*. On television, Henderson's vast catalogue of work includes roles on such popular British series as *Dr. Who*, *Red Dwarf*, and the Michael Palin/Terry Jones comedy *Ripping Yarns*.

In addition to his acting, Henderson was known for his easy-going, approachable personality. "I've got this reputation for being a bit of an uncle figure," he once said, "and people do unburden themselves to me. There is an old saying that a friend in need is a pain in the neck, but I won't turn anyone away. A lot of people cry on my shoulder. I think it's the gray hair that does it."

Henderson is survived by his wife Shirley Stelfox, a son, and a daughter. He was 64. ☹

Special thanks to Iain Lowson for contributing to this story.



ANOTHER FACE OF DARTH VADER: James Earl Jones will appear in the CD-ROM game *Rising Sun*.



STAR WARS AND LEGO BUILD TOY ALLIANCE

A whole new universe of *Star Wars* play and collecting possibilities will open up when Danish construction toy giant the LEGO Group releases its first line of playsets inspired by the *Star Wars* saga early next year.

For Lucasfilm and LEGO, the new alliance represents another key business partnership to help bring *Star Wars* fans new and different ways to experience George Lucas' stories. But for fans of both companies, the marriage of the beloved film series with the classic toys is perhaps the most exciting possibility since Kenner first started producing *Star Wars* action figures over 20 years ago.

The worldwide multi-year agreement between Lucasfilm and LEGO, which marks the first time LEGO has ever licensed any film property, assures that LEGO playsets based on both the original and the upcoming *Star Wars* trilogies will be available well into the next millennium. In fact, the first *Star Wars* LEGO building sets, to be released in early 1999, will be inspired by the original *Star Wars* movies and characters, with the introduction of LEGOs based on the new prequel trilogy coming later that year, to coincide with the much-anticipated release of *Star Wars: Episode I*.

LEGOs were created in the 1930s by Danish toymaker Ole Kirk Christiansen, whose

family still owns the company. Since then, kids all over the world have grown up with the unique toys, which enable users to build their own fantasy environments from scratch. The toys are so popular that the company has three Legoland theme parks around the globe.

Over the years, LEGOs have grown more and more sophisticated, making the upcoming *Star Wars* line all the more promising. Soon, LEGO users will have the opportunity to create things like their own Death Stars or starships, using either the precise instructions or their own imaginations to build the *Star Wars* universe in their own homes. The new *Star Wars* LEGO sets represent a distinctly different, and complimentary, approach to *Star Wars* play than the traditional, and still wildly popular, figures, ships, and playsets produced by Kenner.

"With this relationship, two of the most powerful brands in the toy business are joining forces," said Howard Roffman, Vice President of Lucas Licensing. "LEGO construction toys based on *Star Wars* will add a whole new dimension of fun to the *Star Wars* play experience."

Lucasfilm President Gordon Radley concurred, adding, "We are proud to have our *Star Wars* construction toys designed and market-

ed by a company that is renowned for quality, creativity and imagination."

LEGO Group President and CEO Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen summed it up succinctly. "LEGO play material stimulates children's imagination, creativity and personal development," he said. "It includes creative, limitless and imaginative play enjoyed by children and parents alike. *Star Wars* mirrors many of the same values as a timeless epic saga, enjoyed by generations which celebrates the qualities of courage, heroism and friendship through a very imaginative and exciting story." ☺

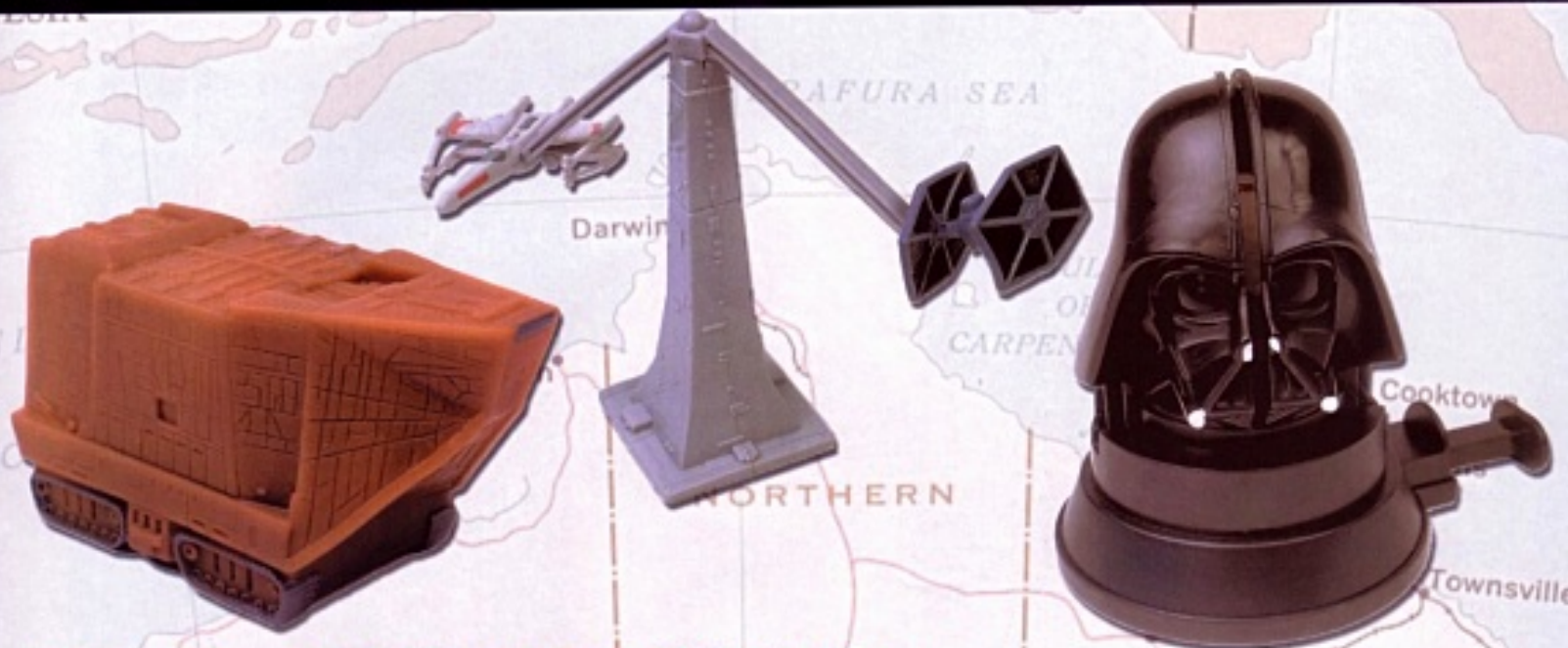
DECIPHER ANNOUNCES BIGGEST CCG TOURNAMENT WEEKEND EVER

In a call to arms almost as commanding as an attack on the Death Star, thousands of *Star Wars* Customizable Card Game competitors will come together for what is shaping up to be the biggest weekend of *Star Wars* CCG tournaments yet.

At least 10,000 players from all over the world are expected to participate simultaneously in Decipher's Shawn Valdez Tournament Weekend for the *Star Wars* Customizable Card Game, August 29-30. The event is named after *Star Wars* fan and CCG enthusiast Shawn Valdez, the 13-year-old hero who lost his battle with leukemia in August, 1996, but was immortalized with his own CCG card that found Lucasfilm and Decipher naming a Rebel trooper from its Hoth expansion set after him. (Shawn's story is told in more detail in Issue 34 of the *Insider*).

To pay tribute to Shawn, Decipher has announced that all proceeds from the weekend event will be donated to a battle more important than those depicted in the *Star Wars* saga: the fight against cancer. At the Valdez family's request, all entry fees and donations raised will be contributed to the Jacksonville Child Cancer Fund, an organization in Shawn's home town of Jacksonville, Florida, that raises money for essential non-medical support services to assist children who are facing life with cancer.

While his CCG card ensures that Shawn Valdez will be a part of the *Star Wars* universe forever, there's no doubt that, if he were still with us, Shawn would also be participating in this August's tournament along with 10,000 of his closest friends. For more information on the tournament weekend, check out Decipher's website at www.decipher.com, and if you're planning on competing, may the Force be with you! ☺



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«YOUNG JEDI AT REST: Jake Lloyd, who plays young Anakin Skywalker, takes a break on the Mos Espa set, filmed on location near Tozeur, Tunisia.

CHILD OF THE FORCE



IS THIS 9-YEAR OLD KID REALLY DARTH VADER?

by Scott Chernoff

AH, TO BE YOUNG AND A JEDI.

Jake Lloyd may only be in the third grade, but he has what's got to be one of the most prized roles in motion picture history: Anakin Skywalker, the young Darth Vader, in Episode I of the *Star Wars* saga. But then, it should be no surprise that the nine-year-old actor won the part over the 6,000 others who auditioned; after all, he had played the part before.

"When I was six," Jake told the *insider*, "I was Darth Vader for Halloween. Now I got to be a Jedi again."

Yes, Jake isn't just "a" Jedi, he's the Jedi—as in *Return of the Jedi*. But Jake, who has also appeared in the films *Jingle All the Way* and *Unhook the Stars*, said that playing the boy who would be

Vader wasn't all that difficult. "I just act like myself," Jake said. "He's a lot like me. I love doing mechanics, he is one mechanical kid. I like to build stuff, he likes to build stuff. I just act like myself."

Getting into the role, Jake insisted that, as the Sith Lord, "I'm not evil—I killed the Emperor, so I'm not evil. But," he added, "I'm sure when I'm dead all those spirits of the people I killed would just start beating the crud out of me. When I'm that old Anakin, they're like, 'Get back here, baldie!'"

Joining a pantheon of actors who have brought life to the Anakin/Vader role, including David Prowse, James Earl Jones, and the late Sebastian Shaw, Jake won praise from his co-stars for his professionalism and talent. He said getting his start as an actor was simple: "I

begged," Jake confessed. "How I wanted to act was I saw Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Terminator 2*, and I thought that was the best movie. I still do. It's awesome. I was running around the house yelling, 'I'm Schwarzenegger, too!'"

Having successfully worn down parents Lisa and Bill, Jake landed a manager and an agent and soon found himself making the trek into Los Angeles from their home in a remote suburb where the family moved last year from Fort Collins, Colorado. "What's fun about acting," he said, "is that you get to play a different character all the time instead of being the same person every single day. You get to switch back and forth. It's really cool."

Before long, Jake broke into television commercials. "I've done 34 commercials," Jake said. "I'm going to celebrate on my 35th—I'm

EPISODE I STAR

JAKE LLOYD

ON ARNOLD, ANAKIN AND BEATING BOBA FETT



I WAS SPEECHLESS

WHEN I MET ARNOLD [SCHWARZENEGGER]

going to go back to Marvel Mania [a Marvel Comics theme restaurant in Universal City]. It's great—it shows all the X-Men stuff, and there's this humungous video screen and when something happens, like if Wolverine hits somebody, it starts shaking. It's awesome! I got Captain America's autograph. I was hoping for Venom's, but you know, you can't have everything. And you might not want to ask Venom—he might just stick his tongue out and rip your head off."

In addition to commercials, Jake also guest-starred on *ER* and in director Nick Cassavettes' *Unhook the Stars* before being cast as the son of the man who inspired his career, Arnold Schwarzenegger, in *Jingle All the Way*. "That's the only time I was speechless in my life," Jake confided. "I was speechless when I met Arnold, and I cried when I got the part in *Star Wars*. I wasn't very speechless for *Star Wars*, but I just started bawling."

Being chosen to play the pivotal role of Anakin Skywalker in Episode I was the culmination of a long process for the young performer. "I waited two years to get that part," Jake remembered. "I auditioned two times. I was so relieved."

Clearly, as evidenced by his earlier Halloween costume, Jake was already a *Star Wars* fan before he auditioned the first time.

"And when I saw the second one," he continued, "how well they acted when Han Solo was getting frozen in carbonite, I just started crying. I thought it was so real. It looked real."

An avid collector of *Star Wars* toys, Jake will soon be a toy himself—Kenner is sure to release an Anakin action figure. "That's going to be strange," he said. "Some kids might be pushing me off a boat or something. You know how you could just, like, randomly pick a toy and then use him to be your bad guy?"

Though he hasn't yet seen the figure, Jake said, "I saw a rough sketch for the T-shirts—really cool. The guy who draws *Silver Surfer* does it. I'm like, 'Yes! My favorite comic book character's artist is drawing me!' Until the new toys come out, Jake has some very unique *Star Wars* toys to play with. "I got to keep a lot of cool stuff," he said. "I got to keep an original lightsaber, and I got to keep the costume."

"As soon as we got hold of the *Star Wars* video," he remembered, "I started to watch it. It was really cool. It just got more interesting the more I watched it, and when I saw *Return of the Jedi*, I was just amazed. It's my favorite. I thought the speeder bikes made it great, and when the *Millennium Falcon* was flying through stuff—that was so cool!"

Jake said the props, costumes, and sets for Episode I were unlike anything he'd ever seen. "They were amazing," he said. "It was just fantastic. I was blown away the first day! I thought they were going to be normal sets, and then I got onto it, and I'm like, 'Oh, my gosh!' It could win any award at the Oscars—dramatics, supporting actor, actress, and everything—best effects, best characters, funniest character." (That award, by the way, would go to actor Ahmed Best, Jake said—"He's one of the coolest guys I've ever met.")

The actor also gave George Lucas high marks for keeping his cool in the unnervingly hot Tunisian desert. "He was very nice, just calm. Out in the middle of the Sahara desert, he wears a T-shirt and jeans. (Although Jake filmed in Tunisia and London, when the production went to Italy, Jake and his family went to EuroDisney, where they rode Star Tours. "It's in French," Jake said. "It's hilarious!")

Lucas was just one of the people Jake bonded with on the set. "They were all just great," he said of his fellow cast members. "All of them were just, as they say in England, 'brilliant.' They're all so nice to everybody on the set. They were so down to earth, it was unbelievable. It was a big slice of heaven and a side order of fries."

Jake admitted that he did have a favorite co-star, but it was not Liam Neeson, Ewan McGregor, Natalie Portman, Kenny Baker, Sam Jackson, Warwick Davis, or any of the familiar names associated with Episode I. Instead, it was his six-year-old sister, Madison.

"She played Princess Ellie," Jake said with pride. "She got to be in a lot of scenes. She's standing right behind Artoo, and before the





«GOOFING AROUND: Jake at work, at home and at play with sister Madison who is also in Episode I (top to bottom).



FROM SCHWINN TO STARSHIP: Jake as young Anakin Skywalker races through the Tatooine desert in a scene from *Star Wars: Episode I* (above), cruising the streets of Southern California on his bike (below). We dig his Anakin togs, but think his T-shirt is even more Force-ful.

scene started, she'd rub his head. It was cool. They made her feel so included. They made an extra call sheet for her. I felt really good that my sister was included." Jake also said that Madison would be ready if Princess Ellie ever was called to battle: "She has one mean kick to the leg," he said.

When Jake and his sister aren't acting, he likes to spend his time playing either soccer or guitar, and when not watching *Star Wars* or *Terminator 2*, his tastes run toward James Bond, Indiana Jones, and *Rocky's Modern Life*. Lately, he's been devoting a lot of time to *Shadows of the Empire* on his Nintendo 64.

"I finally beat Boba Fett, finally, yesterday!" he said. "It felt so nice. I felt kind of embarrassed because it was so easy. All you have to do is shoot the seekers and when you run out of seekers on *Slave I*, then you use your pulse cannon, and it'll just start blowing the crud out of him. The seekers are better for Boba Fett, because Boba Fett isn't made of steel, so if he gets hit by a seeker, it's cool when you kill him, he starts spiraling up."

Jake said the victory over Boba Fett was the first thing on his mind that morning. "I came to school today," he said, "and I was like, 'Jordan, I beat Boba Fett!' And Jordan was all, 'Good.'" Jake said his friends are important to

him, and he strives to keep his acting as separate as possible. "They see me as a regular kid, nothing special," he said. "Every time I make a new friend, I want them to think of me as a regular kid, not as an actor."

Indeed, Jake (with no small amount of credit due his parents) has managed to stay incredibly grounded for a regular kid who happens to be at the center of one of the most anticipated movies of all time. With less than a year to go before the movie's release, Jake, like

kids (and adults) across the world, is eagerly looking forward to seeing Episode I. "I can't wait," he said. "I get to go to every premiere there is. *Star Wars* World Tour '99!"

In the meantime, Jake Lloyd is back in school and continuing to act. He says he'd like to keep acting when he grows up—after college and a career as a scientist. Next up: a Pringles ad. It'll be commercial number 35, and you know what that means: another shot at the Venom autograph. ☺



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SWORD OF THE JEDI

ACCLAIMED AUTHOR

TERRY BROOKS

TALKS ABOUT ADAPTING EPISODE I

by Scott Chernoff



AT THE SAME TIME GEORGE LUCAS WAS TAKING THE SILVER SCREEN BY STORM WITH THE 1977 RELEASE OF *STAR WARS*, TERRY BROOKS WAS MAKING WAVES OF HIS OWN ON THE PRINTED PAGE. THAT YEAR, BROOKS, THEN A PRACTICING ATTORNEY, PUBLISHED HIS FIRST NOVEL, *THE LEGENDARY SWORD OF SHANNARA*, AND SET A NEW STANDARD IN THE WORLD OF FANTASY LITERATURE. NOW, BROOKS AND LUCAS HAVE TEAMED UP FOR THE FIRST TIME, WITH BROOKS PENNING THE NOVEL OF *STAR WARS*: EPISODE I.

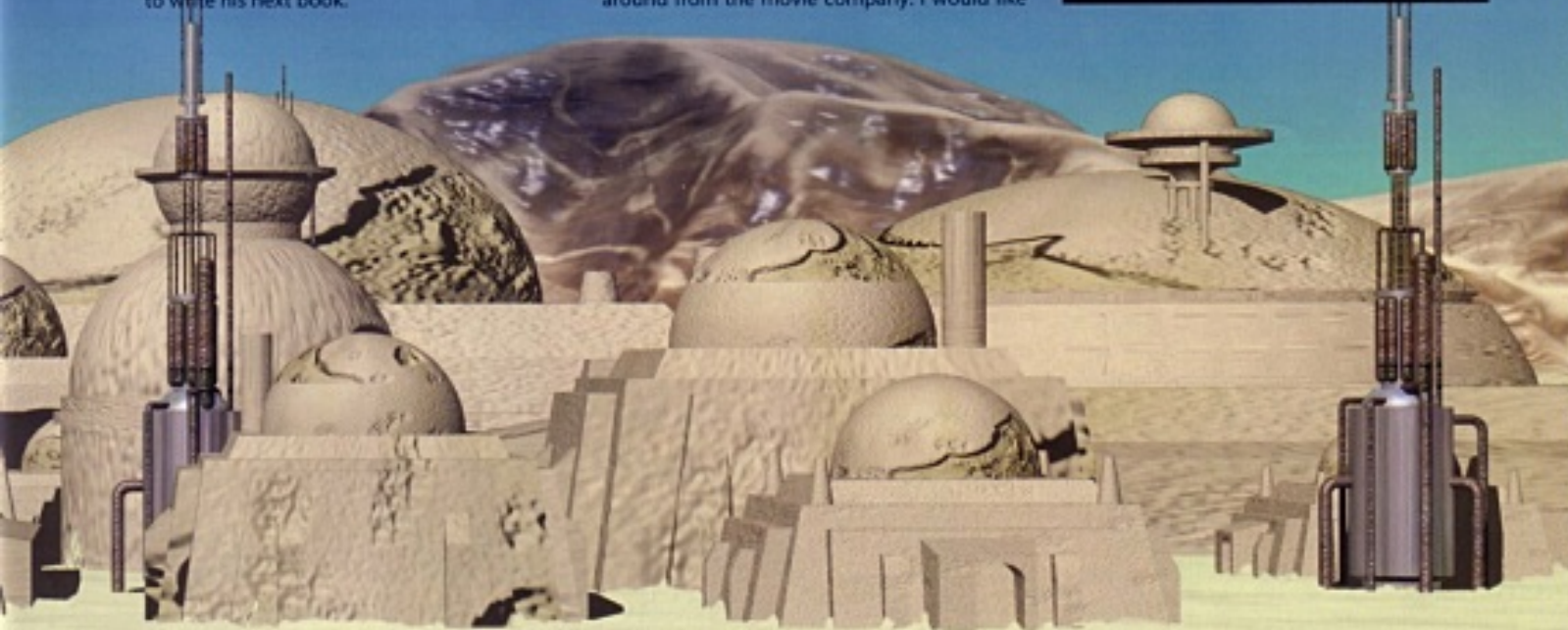
In the two decades since his initial *Shannara* success, Brooks has become a giant of the genre. In addition to the eight (and counting) *Shannara* books, Brooks created five novels in his *Landover* series, and last year published *Running with the Demon*, the first in a new three-book series set in contemporary America. In 1992, the author wrote the novelization for the movie *Hook*, but found the experience so unfulfilling that he swore off adapting films until George Lucas invited him into the *Star Wars* universe.

Brooks, 54, lives in Seattle, and sometimes Hawaii, with his wife Judine, with whom he shares four children and step-children ranging in age from 14 to 38, and one infant grandson—*Star Wars* fans all, "except the two-year-old, and he will be," Brooks said. When the *Insider* talked to him, Brooks had just finished work on the Episode I novel and was preparing to write his next book.

How did you get involved with *Star Wars*?

I got a telephone call from Linda Grey, the president of the publishing company I'm with, Ballantine Books, back in November, and she said, "How would you feel about doing another movie tie-in?" I said, "I'd rather die." I had made it clear I never wanted to do another one of those things. But she said, "Well, Lucasfilm called. We have bought the rights to the next group of *Star Wars* books, and they'd like you to do the adaptation for the next *Star Wars* movie." And the first thought to go through my mind was, "If I turn this down, I'll never be able to explain it to my kids."

But I was kind of gun-shy from the last experience, so I said, "If I were to do this, I would want to be able to meet with George Lucas to discuss his vision for this, which is something I didn't get to do with *Hook*, and I would want some cooperation this time around from the movie company. I would like



THE FIRST THOUGHT TO GO THROUGH MY MIND

WAS, "IF I TURN THIS DOWN, I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN IT TO MY MY KIDS."

them to give me stuff that would help me do a good job with this project." And she said, "Good, because he wants to meet you, too, and see if you're the right person."

So I got on a plane and flew down to Skywalker Ranch, and spent two days with the people from Lucasfilm, viewing rushes from the movie, looking at the stills, reading the script, getting insight and help. And then I had four hours with George Lucas, when we were able to discuss at length all of the questions that I had regarding what I'd read in the script, and to have him give me some feedback on what he'd like to see happen with the book.

This was the first time I discovered that what he was looking for was not a traditional novelization of the sort that we're all familiar with, but an adaptation in which you would expand well beyond the boundaries of what the movie would cover. In fact, we would approach the whole story-telling process from an entirely different point-of-view than the movie would, and the focus would be somewhat different than the movie, and we would have a lot more in the way of background material, and in-depth looks at the characters involved. I got very excited about that.

What do you mean when you say the novel has an entirely different point-of-view from the movie?

The point-of-view is somewhat similar, but it's expanded, because George felt there should be more focus on Anakin Skywalker than what he was able to do in the movie. And he was right about his approach, because it was impossible to focus the movie from the perspective of a nine-year-old boy and make it work. But with the book, it was entirely possible. There's a lot more latitude there, enough so that you could include the parts of the movie that don't necessarily involve Anakin's point-of-view, but expand on things in the book from his point-of-view. Because really, he's the focus of this entire trilogy. This is how Anakin Skywalker becomes Darth Vader.

So—how does this wonderful little nine-

year-old boy make this dreadful transition? What happens to him? And, more to the point, what's going on inside his head? It's something you don't know in a movie—you can only surmise because, of course, you don't get inside the boy's head in the movie-telling process. We were looking at taking more of an approach that looked at things from Anakin's point of view, and expanded on his story. So the action of the book starts at an entirely different point than the movie.

Sooner or later?

We begin the story much earlier, so there's a lot of extrapolation of Anakin's background, his thinking, and his transition—his mental, emotional, physical transition during the time-period of this story. Without giving anything away, he undergoes quite a definite transition, more so than any other character in the movie. No question about that. His transition is monumental. So it's a logical place to begin, and it was a very interesting approach to be able to take for the story. George provided a lot of the insights and a lot of the ideas for how that approach might take place, and that was very, very helpful.

Did it surprise you how much of an interest George Lucas took in the book?

Yes. My experience with *Hook* was there was no interest whatsoever in the book. I always felt like I was on the outside looking in. But all of the people I've worked with at Lucasfilm have been wonderful, extremely helpful, very cooperative, very relaxed about everything. There wasn't a lot of tension or concern that maybe I was stealing secrets and selling them on the net or something. I was impressed with the amount of information they were willing to give to me—really, more than what I needed to get the job done. But I'd rather have more than less anytime.

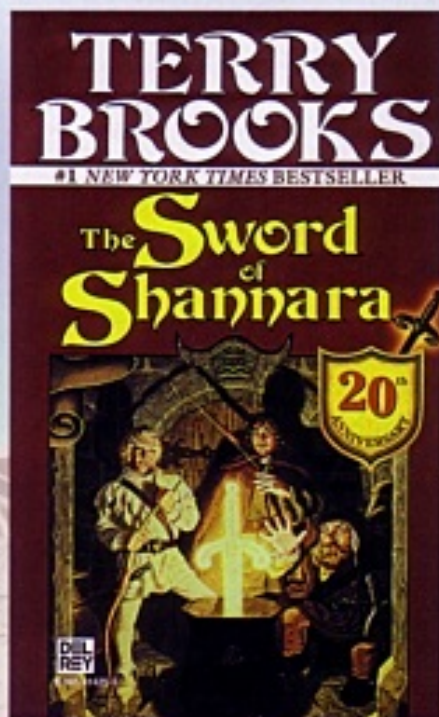
It seems it was inevitable you would work with George Lucas, since the first *Sword of Shannara* and the first *Star Wars* were both released in 1977.

Yes, that's true. I've always had this kind of symbiotic relationship with him in that we both emerged at the same time in terms of a major project. Obviously, he also did *American Graffiti* and some other wonderful things, but *Star Wars* was really his definitive movie and the movie that everybody identifies him with. The same is true for me with *Sword of Shannara*.

Also, we both had the same book editor—he dealt with Judy-Lynn del Rey on the first three *Star Wars* movie tie-ins, and at the same time she was dealing with me on *Sword of Shannara* and subsequent *Shannara* books. She used to talk to me about him and vice versa, so I had this sense of what he was doing, and I particularly felt that we were writing the same kind of stories.

The kind of story he's telling is essentially an adventure story, and that's what I do also. I'm writing fantasy, but at the core, if you strip away the magic trappings, they're adventure stories. And the same is true with the *Star Wars* movies: they're adventure stories with science-fiction trappings. I've always felt like we're doing the same basic thing in different ways. I think we think along certain parallel lines.

Plus, the way he tells a story mirrors the approach I like to take. He's got a lot of things going on—there are a lot of secrets, a lot of false starts and then bringing you back on line, and red herrings. It's very familiar. I was very comfortable with this, and I liked the script



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Hugh Fleming
47



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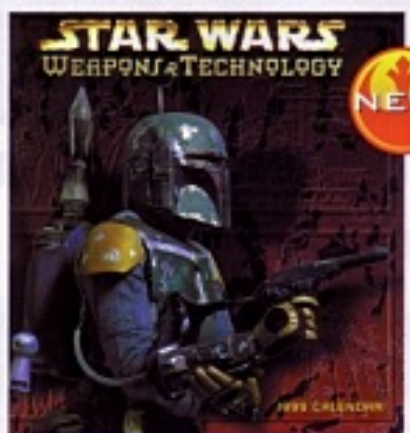
The full page Yoda illustration from *Insider* #26 has been blown up to a spectacular 24" x 36" high quality poster. Beautifully painted by one of Japan's premier science fiction illustrators, Tsuneo Sanda, this poster is a must for fans of the 900 year old Jedi Master.

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| | \$75.00 |



Princess Leia Keychain

Our first Princess Leia is approximately 1 1/2" across and is made from finely crafted pewter.

LKC3 \$7.00

Boba Fett Emblem Keychain

Find out who the real *Star Wars* fans are by flashing them this keychain depicting an emblem from Boba Fett's Mandalorian armor, and see if they recognize it. Keychain is approximately 1 1/2" across and is made from finely crafted pewter.

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CARDS AND GAMES



Jabba's Palace Limited Edition Expansion Set

This new expansion brings battling back to the root of gameplay and introduces a host of new aliens, vehicles, and locations, as well as increased player interaction. The 180-card set includes great cards like Jabba the Hutt, Bib Fortuna, Salacious Crumb, and Sarlacc.

LTC6P Box of 70 Booster Packs: \$125.00
LTC6Q Set of Six Booster Packs: \$14.95



Dagobah Limited Edition Expansion Set

Land on Dagobah with this new 180-card SWCCG expansion set, with 26 more rare cards than previous sets! New cards include bounty hunters, asteroids, TIE bombers, Jedi training cards, and Yoda. New 9-card packs and one rarity level mean entire sets can be collected quicker and easier. Be the first on your block to get a space slug card.

LTC6I Box of 60 Booster Packs: \$125.00
LTC6J Set of Six Booster Packs: \$14.95

Cloud City Limited Edition Expansion Set

The second Star Wars Customizable Card Game expansion set of 1997 features Lando Calrissian, and finally, Boba Fett! This 180-card set has new rules innovations including the ability to put a "price" on your opponent's head. Available in full boxes of 60 packs or sets of 6 booster packs.

LTC6L Box of 60 packs \$125.00
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SWCCG Official Tournament Sealed Deck

This beautiful new product comes in a **random** assortment of 6 different box designs. Each sealed deck has 4 Premiere Unlimited Expansion packs, 1 A New Hope Limited Expansion, and one unique 18-card black bordered pack made exclusively for this product. 1 box per sealed deck product.

LTC6N 1 BOX \$19.95

Star Wars Second Anthology (not shown)

Decipher comes back with another great anthology set that includes 2 packs Dagobah Limited Edition Expansion, 2 packs Cloud City Limited Edition Expansion, 8 packs Premiere Unlimited Edition Expansion, 6 white bordered preview cards, rules supplement, and a great storage box that holds over 800 cards. Don't miss it! LTC6O \$32.00



Star Wars Monopoly Windows 95 CD-ROM Collector's Edition

This Windows 95 CD-ROM game is a special collector's edition that comes with an exclusive Anakin Skywalker pewter figure and three collectible coins.

LSOFT1 \$59.95



Trivial Pursuit Star Wars Classic Trilogy Collector's Edition

2,400 questions about the Star Wars trilogy, including 100 photo cards. Includes electronic R2-D2 randomizer and 4 pewter character tokens. This is the ultimate test of your Star Wars knowledge. Batteries included. LG7 \$49.95



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LLC9	Luke	LLC28	Luke & Boba Fett Edition of 1977
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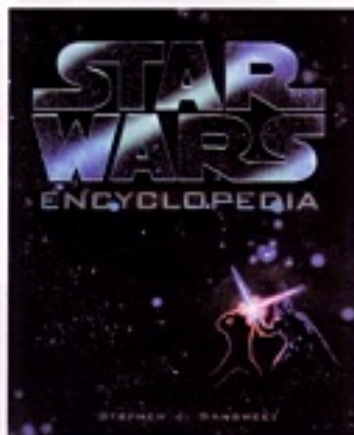
L164M \$29.50



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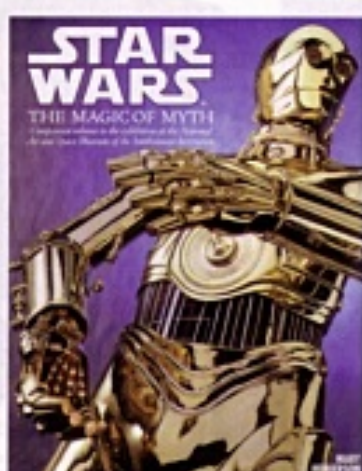
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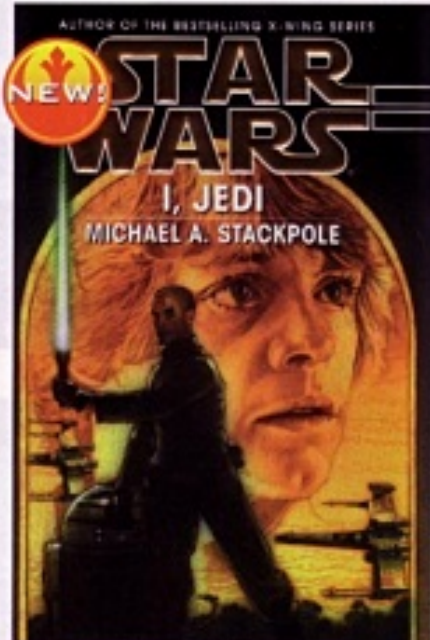
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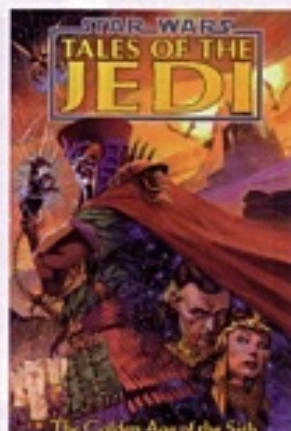
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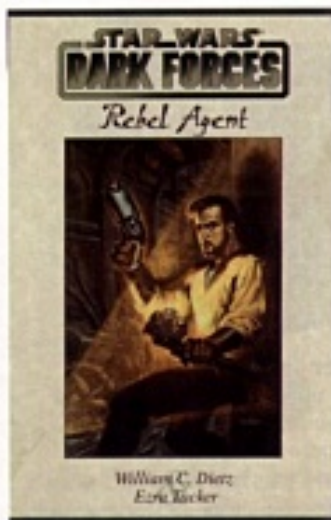
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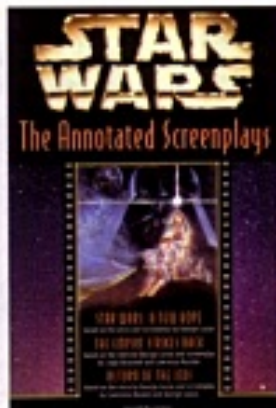
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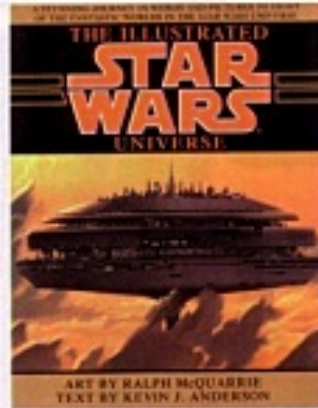
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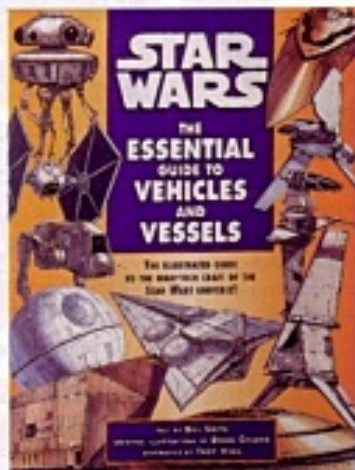
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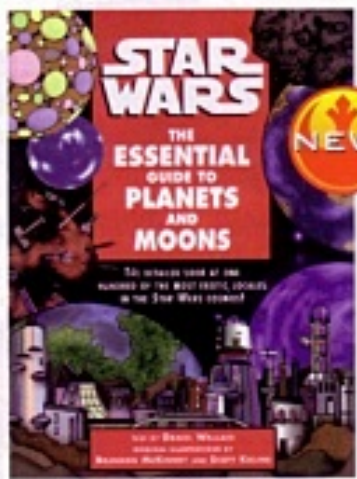
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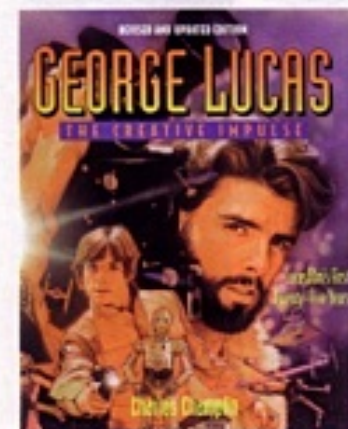
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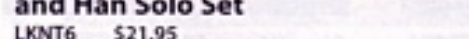
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LKNF15
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LKNF14
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LKNF3
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LKNF10
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LSU11 Han Solo in Carbonite
LSU12 Darth Vader w/ Lightsaber
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ACTION FIGURES

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LKN19

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Each cantina band member action figure comes with FIVE musical instruments, the most accessories of any Star Wars action figure to date, and it is articulated at the neck, shoulders, legs, elbows, and wrists! The cantina figure may sell out at any time. Special separate shipping charge applies to this item (see below). This figure will not be available on carded packaging. There is only one figure with one sculpt.

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Stormtrooper with Freeze Frame



Gamorrean Guard with Freeze Frame



TIE Fighter Pilot with Freeze Frame



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right from the beginning. I thought it was very much in the mold of the first three stories. It was a logical continuance of the story—I suppose that sounds strange since it's a prequel—but nevertheless, cut from the same cloth. There are some very interesting ideas, and very interesting twists and turns going on. It was wonderful, and even before seeing anything on the screen, just seeing it in my head from the bare bones of the script, I could tell it was going to be good.

Did seeing the rushes help you visualize the story?

Yes, any images you get always help. If you're creating a book from scratch, it's all in your head. No reader can say, "I don't know if this is right or not, I'm gonna go out and check." But certainly with a movie, they're going to check the images—does this match up with what we saw in the movie? And to the extent that you're describing places and characters, what the weather's like, what the terrain is like, you want to be consistent. So the images give you that help. They give you a look at the characters, the setting, the ships, the palaces.

Plus, when you see the movie, it gives you a sense of the excitement of that visual medium you can't capture anywhere else in the same way. When you're having a space battle, it doesn't happen the same way anywhere else as it does on the screen. It's nice to get a sense of what that feels like, and then you can find

the words to capture that on the written page.

You're accustomed to creating your own worlds. Was it difficult working within the *Star Wars* framework?

I haven't felt uncomfortable because I like the series, number one. I like the movies, and I like this particular storyline, and I think the characters are very interesting and complex. They're not one-dimensional, and for a writer that's probably the first thing that comes to mind—are the characters interesting enough that you can do something with them?

I had thoughts going in about what I could do, and in some cases he said, "No, you can't touch that." But in most instances he said, "Yeah, go ahead, you develop it, take it in any way you think is reasonable." Or I'll tell him what I'm doing and he'll say, "Yeah, that sounds good."

What types of things were you told you not develop?

That would be something he's going to develop in the other movies, or because they would be better developed in a later book. Obviously, you want to do as much as you can on any project, but I don't feel like it's been cut short in any way. It really wasn't a problem. He just said, "Don't go into this particular area."

But after I had the book written, I called him up and said, "We've been talking it over with the editorial staff, and we've got three or four things we'd like to do more with. Can you give me some background information?" And he talked to me for an hour, and gave me some terrific information that's not ever been released before and won't be in the movie—about the backgrounds of the characters, and the Jedi, and some of the different political situations that backdrop this story that give much more depth and resonance to the book.

Were you able to create background information yourself?

Actually, yes. It may sound as if it all comes from George, but that's not entirely true. In some instances, he just said, "You go do it." If he didn't have the dialogue worked out, he'd say, "Write your own dialogue, I'll look at it." He understands that what you hear on the screen doesn't work the same way as what you see on the written page. You need to do more with dialogue in a book than you do on the screen. You have more time, you have more space, and the dialogue's more important in some ways.

You don't have those visuals to take your mind off of what people are saying. You need to expand and add things.

There are entirely new chapters in this book, in which everything's invented, and it's all mostly about Anakin. There's also stuff on some of the other characters, too, that's not in the movie at all. The genesis for this was mostly from George, but he didn't say, "This is the way that I want you to do it, follow these rules." He basically said, "Go do something with this," and presumably I've been able to do it in such a way that it stays true to the character but is interesting and gives another dimension to the storytelling.

Was it liberating to work in somebody else's world and not be responsible for coming up with everything?

Yes, it's definitely a vacation sort of project. Not to diminish the challenges, but it's not as severe because you don't have to create everything from the ground up. You walk into an established structure, and your challenge is to take the storyline and present it in an interesting and compelling way. But I don't have to make up everything about the characters, and I don't have to write all the dialogue, and I don't have to set all the scenes, and I don't have to think about how the story's going to go, because that is in place. I just have to find a way to present it that moves the story along in the right way in a book.

What do the worlds of *Star Wars* and *Shannara* have in common?

These are both historical sagas. The stories of the *Shannara* world and the stories of the *Star Wars* world cover different generations of certain families, and cover a period of time with a political, social and economic backdrop which is undergoing a transformation. There is a power involved that affects everything—it's more metaphysical in *Star Wars*, and it's more a form of magic in the *Shannara* world. But in both instances, it operates the same way. There's a light side and a dark side. It's a two-edged sword, and it can go both ways depending on how it's used. Any time you use the Force or the power of the magic in the *Shannara* world, there are consequences, and you don't always know what those consequences are going to be.

I think there are also similarities in the way the main characters are struggling with their identity, and struggling with the fact that they are the heir to something. They're trying

I LIKE THE MOVIES, AND I LIKE THIS PARTICULAR
STORYLINE, AND I THINK THE CHARACTERS ARE
VERY INTERESTING AND COMPLEX.

to come to terms with what their heritage is, what their legacy of magic or power is. With Luke Skywalker and Anakin Skywalker, it's the connection with the Jedi and the power of the Force. In the *Shannara* world, it's the connection with the *Shannara* name and the Sword of *Shannara*, and the power that weapon provides. The stories also, in the way they're told and developed, have quite a bit of similarity in their impact, and the nature of that impact on whole worlds.

You started out as a lawyer. When did you begin writing?

I still have my stories from fourth grade about the kids who stay overnight in a haunted house and discover a rocket ship with aliens in it parked in the basement. I have been writing stories since that time—around 40 years. I tried my hand at Westerns and space opera and war stories and horse stories. I did all that at one point or another. They were all adventure stories, but I never found a format I was really comfortable with until I found fantasy writing.

It's a metaphorical kind of storytelling. You're telling a story about one thing, but you're also telling a story about the way things are in this world. That's always been my approach. Yes, I am writing about the world of the *Shannara*, but I'm also writing about what is true about our own lives. Everybody needs to behave in a logical fashion and it needs to be consistent with what we know about our own world.

You set your last book, *Running with the Demon*, in your home state of Illinois. Why did you write a book set in the "real" world?

I wanted to tell a *Shannara*-type fantasy set in the present, and I particularly wanted to deal with issues that we read about in the paper every day. There's more of an immediate feeling when you're talking about a present-day Armageddon situation, and an evil that exists in this world, and we're contributing to it because we're feeding right into it. I was very happy with that book, and I'm very happy with the follow-up, *A Knight of the Word*, which comes out in August of this year.

And there's one more after that?

Yes, there's one more, which will come out late summer or early fall of '99, which I have to write—as we talk! I haven't started! I've just finished the *Star Wars* project, so I've got to get to work on this next book, which I'd like to have done around the end of the year. Then I'm done with that series, and I will be going back into *Shannara*. I'm going to be doing a bunch of projects in *Shannara* for a couple years.

Would you consider doing the next two *Star Wars* novels if Lucasfilm asked you?

Of course I'd consider it, but I think it's a case of three things: how intrigued would I be by the next project? Would they want somebody to do it a second time, or would they want somebody different? And what other projects do I have on the table?

Do you know the stories of the next two, or where the story is going?

Only from what I can gather from looking at the present storyline, which suggests that certain things are going to happen. But beyond that, no, I haven't talked with George about this at all. I don't know that anybody has. He's pretty much keeping that to himself at the moment. I don't know a thing.

Is it difficult maintaining that mystery when everybody already knows how the whole saga ends?

It's a very interesting way of telling a story. I just wrote a prequel to the *Shannara* series called *First King of Shannara*, which came out in '96. That book presented me with the same challenge. I was dealing with a history that was established, and I was going to tell the story of how certain things happened. The question was, how do I take characters when they are younger and introduce them and make them interesting? How do I reveal the story without it seeming like a rehash of stuff we already know?

It has to be a fresh story. It has to surprise the reader. I think that's the same thing that George was faced with in doing the prequel. How does he tell this story and make it inter-

esting and compelling, so that the audience doesn't say, "We already know how this turns out, so why are we watching this?" That's an intriguing storytelling challenge that you get with these stories. And I liked doing that.

Do you think this story would be just as exciting and intriguing had Episodes IV, V, and VI not yet been made?

Boy, there's a tough question. It's like you have to wipe your mind clean. I don't know, because I think if you were writing this as the first story, you might take a different approach. I think part of what makes this story work is that you know what's coming. I can't believe George didn't put this story together without considering that moviegoers would know this is the story before. If you saw it without seeing the others, it wouldn't diminish the experience in any way, but it's intriguing to have that back-drop of information that 32 years later, look where we're going to be, and it feeds right into what you're seeing now.

But I think that by the same token, you can enjoy them probably in any order. And actually that's true of the *Shannara* books, as I think about it. I think any good series that's generational in nature, you don't necessarily have to read it in any order. You can pick up any of them and they will lead you to the others. The experience will still be wonderful. ☺

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WHEN ARTOO MET WICKET

BY SCOTT CHERNOFF

STAR WARS LEGENDS KENNY BAKER (R2-D2) AND WARWICK DAVIS (WICKET THE EWOK) TELL THE INSIDER ABOUT RETURNING TO THE STAR WARS SAGA FOR EPISODE I

Warwick Davis and Kenny Baker have a lot in common, and it's more than just what meets the eye.

Both of the talented actors were hidden beneath elaborate costumes in the original *Star Wars* trilogy—in which Kenny played R2-D2 and Warwick was Wicket the Ewok—yet they made their characters two of the saga's most beloved. Both are British, and though neither of them ever set out to be actors, both of them are the world-famous stars of some of the most timeless and celebrated movies in cinematic history. (In addition to their *Star Wars* stints, Kenny starred in *Time Bandits* and also appeared in David Lynch's *The Elephant Man*, *Mona Lisa*, *Flash Gordon*, and the Oscar-winning *Amadeus*, while Warwick took the title role in George Lucas' fantasy epic *Willow*—'nuff said.)

As if all that wasn't enough, Warwick and Kenny are both returning for next year's *Star Wars: Episode I*, with Kenny reprising his legendary role as Artoo and Warwick coming through with no less than three new characters. And, yes, there's also the obvious trait these two actors share: both of them turned around expectations for little people by becoming giants of both the silver screen and the *Star Wars* universe.

As R2-D2—the fearless, inquisitive, do-gooding droid with a storied past—Baker projected his own zest for life with every one of

Artoo's trademark shakes and jiggles. With help from *Star Wars* sound designer Ben Burtt, as well as a remote-controlled Artoo used as a double for shots that required the robot to walk, fly through the air, or perform other such stunts, Baker turned the little astromech droid into an unlikely Rebel hero.

Davis, meanwhile, made his *Star Wars* debut in *Return of the Jedi*, when his naturally enthusiastic and energetic performance as a background Ewok won him the plum role of Wicket, the trusting Ewok who befriends Princess Leia. Wicket became such a popular character that he was made the focal point of two Ewok TV-movies (released theatrically overseas) and the Saturday morning *Ewoks* cartoon.

Wicket's emergence as one of the trilogy's most popular characters was all the more amazing considering that the actor who played him had never before acted—indeed, he celebrated his 12th birthday on the *Jedi* set, having joined the production after his grandmother heard an ad on the radio looking for little people to be Ewoks. But since going on to star in *The Ewok Adventure: Caravan of Courage, Ewoks: The Battle for Endor*, and *Willow*, as well as appearing in *Labyrinth* and now *Episode I*, Davis quickly became one of George Lucas' most prolific collaborators.

Now 28, Davis is also famous for playing the evil, madcap title character in all four *Leprechaun* movies—not to be confused with the recent

British production *A Very Unlucky Leprechaun*, in which he portrayed a nice Irish sprite. When he's not acting or playing dad with his infant daughter Annabelle and wife Samantha, Davis is helping other "short actors," with his Willow Management Company, which represents British performers no taller than five feet.

There was no such agency for Baker, 64, who got his show business start touring with an all-little-person revue, eventually hooking up with partner Jack Purvis. Together, they formed the popular cabaret act, the Minitones. Film and television work soon followed for both, with careers skyrocketing when the two landed roles in the first *Star Wars* movie in 1976. (Purvis played the Chief Jawa, and went on the play the Chief Ugnaught in *The Empire Strikes Back* and the Ewok tribe leader Teebo in *Jedi*.)

Sadly, Purvis, who was paralyzed in a car accident in 1991, passed away last year (for more on Jack Purvis' life and career, see *Insider* Issue 37). The death of his former partner capped a difficult period for Baker, who lost his wife of 26 years, Eileen, four years ago. But Baker, who is also the father of two sons and continues on with a solo cabaret act, retains an optimistic outlook on life, and told the *Insider* that he was happy to be returning to the *Star Wars* universe.

Recently, the *Insider* had the opportunity to catch up with both of these *Star Wars* stalwarts, 15 years after they teamed up in *Return of the Jedi*, and just a few months after completing work on *Episode I*. >>

KENNY BAKER ARTOO AND ME

HOW DID IT FEEL climbing back inside the R2-D2 costume for Episode I?

It was quite an event. I got to the studio early, before the film had started, to check out the robot. I found it was exactly the same robot, with the same old boots inside the feet. It had been used for other things since. Inside, there were one or two bits and pieces that weren't there when I was in it. We sorted it all out again and got it back to the shape it was in when I was inside it originally.

Did you play Artoo in anything else besides the Star Wars movies, like the Star Tours ride, "The

Star Wars Holiday Special," TV commercials, or other personal appearances?

No, I did the three movies, the original three, and I didn't see the robot again until Episode I. I hadn't been inside it since *Jedi*.

Donning the old R2-D2 costume must have brought back a flood of memories.

It certainly did. We went to Tunisia, and we went to almost the same spot in the desert that we did the first one, and did quite a bit of shooting out there. It was pretty hot, about 127 degrees on one day.

Is it even hotter inside Artoo? Do you have any kind of cooling system in there?

Everywhere is hot at those temperatures. I had a tiny fan, but that didn't do any good—it just moves the hot air around!

Can you see what's going on around you?

There's just an opaque window, about 4 inches at the most in diameter, and I couldn't see much at all. But I didn't need to, as long as I could see who I was supposed to be reacting to. I'm moving my head from one side to the other to follow the gist of the conversations. That was about it really. I didn't walk anywhere, because they used the three-legged remote-controlled robot to move around. My costume weighs about 80 pounds or something. It's quite heavy, and I couldn't physically move it, apart from wobbling and jeering around and moving the head.

A lot of personality comes through from your performance. What do you do inside Artoo to make the character your own?

I'm acting away inside this thing. You just have to act through the costume. You're still doing the facial expressions, and whatever you need to do, making noises, to try to give the character some life.

I've done that quite often over the years in different costumes. It's the way I move, I presume. That's what it must be. I've been told it's much more effective when I'm in R2-D2, as opposed to the remote-controlled robot. It's a robot, it doesn't really wobble and jiggle around, does it? Although it moves, it's kind of static in other respects. It's a natural movement of the robot that they want to see, and then that's coupled with the dialogue and with the sound effect, and eventually George gets what he wants.

It's hard to know what he does want at times, because you're doing what you're supposed to be doing and hoping it fits in with what's going on around you. You don't see much and you can't hear much, because of the

YOU JUST HAVE TO ACT THROUGH THE COSTUME. YOU'RE STILL DOING THE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, AND WHATEVER YOU NEED TO DO, MAKING NOISES, TO TRY TO GIVE THE CHARACTER SOME LIFE



THREE FOR THE ROAD Kenny Baker (left), Artoo, and insider publisher Dan Madsen, all suited up for his background role, on the set of Episode I.

enormous sound of the whirling of the lights and stuff inside the head of the robot. There's quite a few electronics going on inside there, which is fairly noisy.

Is all that distracting?

Well, it doesn't help. You're slightly cut off from what's going on around you. But it seems to work. It seems to come across OK eventually.

Did you ever worry that Artoo would be computer-generated for the prequels?

It did cross my mind a few times—whether they were going to computerize the job, or even get somebody else to do it. They could always find someone else, I suppose, if they wanted to. But it happened they didn't, and George came up and gave me a nice greeting when we met again at Leavesden studios, and everyone said they were pleased to see me again, so it was great.

They really did seem to be genuinely pleased that I was with it. One of the first assistants said, "It's nice when you're on the

set, because it seems like *Star Wars* again." Just because I was there, it somehow gave the feeling to everybody that it was buzzing again. The atmosphere seemed to be just as electric as it once was.

Was there a lot of camaraderie on the set?

Oh, yeah. Ewan McGregor, Liam Neeson—we all had some good times together. I drank wine with Liam Neeson one night in Tunisia and got talking. Ewan McGregor's a nice, friendly guy, and I liked Natalie. She's a pretty girl, and I liked her mother, thought she was a very nice lady. Jake was great. I thought he was a lovely little

boy, as well as his family, his mother and father, and his sister.

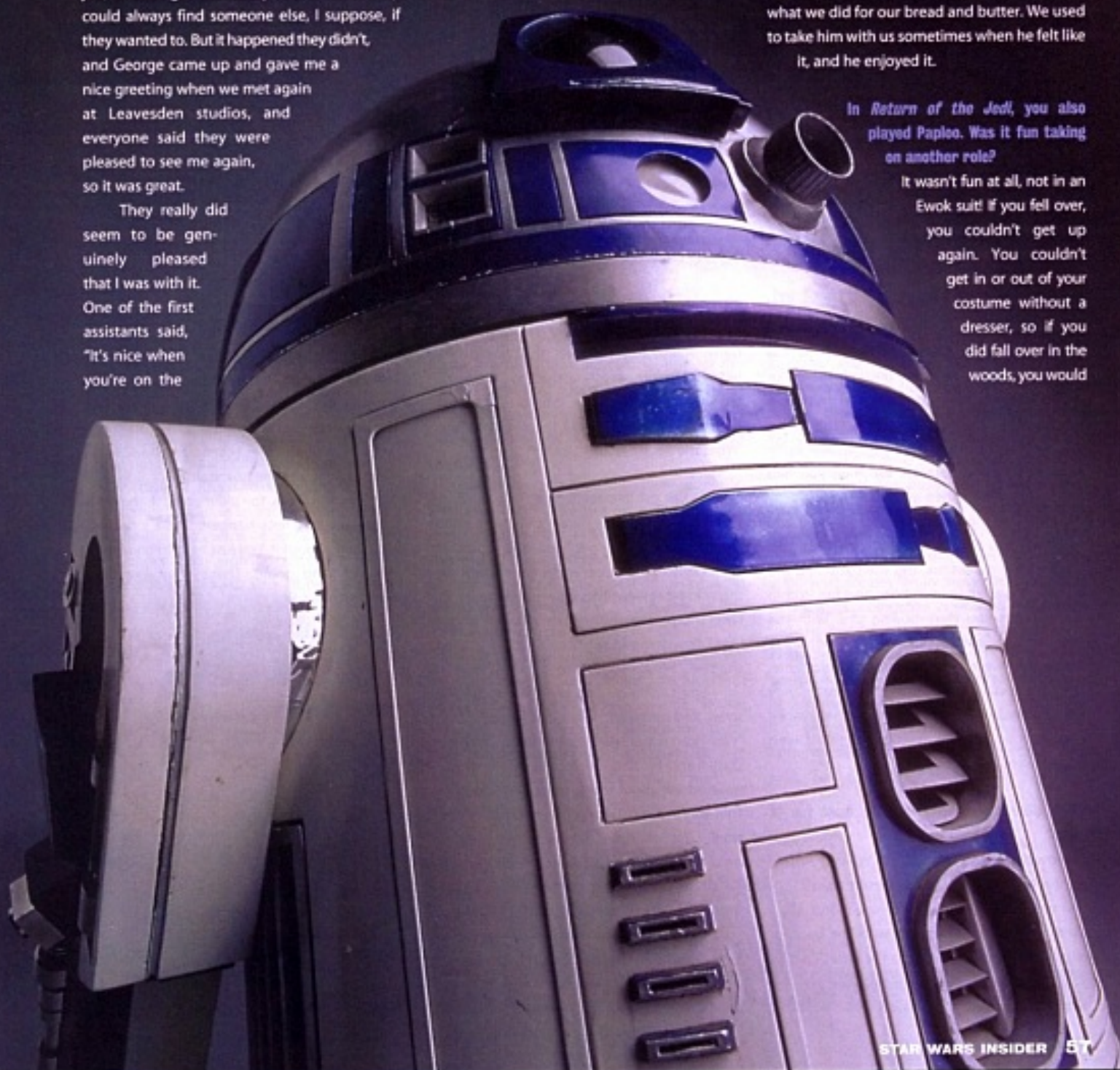
There were a lot of nice people on the movie, and everyone's out there doing their best. Nobody argues. They're all in there to try and make a nice, happy movie, and there was nothing I could say was a bad experience at all. Everybody was enjoying themselves.

Who did you pal around with when you made the first trilogy?

Mark [Hamill] was good fun. He would come in with the boys and have a drink with everybody. Jack and I would take him out with us at night on the cabaret circuit in London, and show him what we did for our bread and butter. We used to take him with us sometimes when he felt like it, and he enjoyed it.

In *Return of the Jedi*, you also played Paploo. Was it fun taking on another role?

It wasn't fun at all, not in an Ewok suit! If you fell over, you couldn't get up again. You couldn't get in or out of your costume without a dresser, so if you did fall over in the woods, you would





"BOY AM I HOT IN THIS COSTUME!" Paploo (Kenry Baker) reflects.

[THE EWOKS] WERE CUTE, GREAT LITTLE CHARACTERS. THEY WERE LOVELY, BUT TO WORK IN THEM, UNBELIEVABLE.

just have to lay there until someone discovered you. Plus, you had rubber all around you and you were sweating and you couldn't see where you were going. It was very, very uncomfortable, but we did it because we wanted to make the movie a success.

Those costumes were just unbelievable because you had pajamas on, then you had the foam rubber, then you had the fur skin, then you had the belt and the armory and several bows and arrows, and the headdress, and you had the gloves on, and then you had the feet on. It was all foam rubber and fur. Within five minutes you were boiling over with the heat. You couldn't breathe, you couldn't see where you were going. Very uncomfortable. They were cute, great little characters. They were lovely, but to work in them, unbelievable. I wouldn't be an Ewok again, I don't think, even if they asked me to be.

Which *Star Wars* movie was the most fun to make?

I enjoyed working [on *Jedi*] in Yuma, Arizona, on the big sail barge in the desert there. That was nice, and we stayed at a nice motel, and I used to play the harmonica with the band at night when we came back to the hotel. I'd play the harmonica, and dance—we were dancing with Carrie Fisher! And we were by a pool. If we

had a few days off, we were sitting by the pool sunbathing, with little lizards flying around everywhere. We went up to the Grand Canyon from Yuma, one weekend when we weren't working. I also enjoyed California, in the redwoods [where the Ewok scenes were filmed], apart from the costumes.

Was *Star Wars* your first movie?

No, I did *Circus of Horrors* and another film in England, and television films. *Star Wars* was just another film, as far as we were concerned at the time. It was nothing special. Nobody expected it to be something terrific. I thought if Alec Guinness was in it, it must have some credibility. He must know more than I do!

But nobody thought it was going to be any good. They all thought, "What a load of rub-

bish is this?" You couldn't understand it at first. It was very confusing—Obi-Wan Kenobi and all these weird, funny names that you'd never heard of before, which at the time were really hard to get your tongue around. The kids got them quickly, but as usual the adults thought, "What the heck's all this about?"

How did you get into performing?

Well, I fell into it, really. I was going to be a commercial artist. I'd left school, and I just met somebody in the street and went on tour with this midget review! The show was in town, and I met this person and she was near the theater. I said, "I'm going to see the show tonight," and she said, "Would you like to join the show?"

She said to go and see the owner of the show, and he asked, "What can you do?" I said, "Well I can ride a bike, I can whistle, I can roller skate," and he said, "Welcome to the show." I traveled for about three years with the show. That was in 1950. I didn't meet Jack until 1960, when I got into the ice show at Wembley, and we did *Snow White*, and *Peter Pan* on ice.

That's how we got the double act. We were the Minitones, a vaudeville act. We would do cabaret and pantomime and whatever else came our way—television, sketches with comedians on weekly shows. We also did a few things for Jim Henson before he died—

Labyrinth and *The Dark Crystal*, as well as *Willow* for George.

Jack and I eventually moved and lived close to each other in North London, which is near Elstree and Leavesden. It was all happening in that area. We were married and had wives and kids and were working every day and every night. We were doing one-nighters all over the place, getting up at 7 with the kids, then going to do a commercial, then doing two shows the same night and then coming home at 2 o'clock in the morning.

And it went on and on until we wanted a night off. But Jack said, "Don't bother, keep working. It won't last forever." Which was true enough. It didn't last.

This was the first *Star Wars* you did without Jack. Did his absence affect your experience?

It did. They had these creatures walking around where all you could see was the costume and the little legs underneath it, and it reminded me of Jack, this guy inside this square box with just little legs underneath it, funny-looking thing.

Poor old Jack. He died last year in October, just after the movie. I used to go to see him a lot in the lunch breaks. He only lived just down the street, so I used have my lunch with him in the garden, and it was great to see him. He was stuck in this wheelchair, paralyzed, but we'd gotten used to it over the years. Then he died one Tuesday morning. He just didn't feel very well and was practically dead before they got him into the hospital.

The trouble is, the older you get, the more these sort of things happen. There's nothing you can do about it. You just have to go on with life and keep going. That's what I've been doing anyway. ☺



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WARWICK DAVIS

KICK IT WITH WICKET

SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT— you play three characters in Episode I?

Yes, more or less. My main character is called Wald. He's best friend to Anakin Skywalker. He's a masked character. But another character I did, I'm a spectator at an event, and I spent the whole day at Leavesden basically sitting in bleachers and moving my head left to right. You'll recognize me as that other character, (photo on opposite page) because I only have hair extensions. I'm also watching the scene as Wald, so I'm in the same place twice!

The third role I did was very brief. I was standing there and lingering, and George just said, "Go and get on a costume." I ran into

It was thrilling for me. The routine of filming out there—our calls each day in Tunisia were 4 a.m., because they wanted to avoid the heat. It was like a military operation every morning, everybody marching out to their jeeps in total silence, and then we're driven off through the desert.

It was just getting light when we got to our location about 45 minutes later. As soon as the sun came up over the horizon, you would immediately feel the heat. You haven't even got a shadow—the sun is that high. That's why I think George loves to go there—because it looks like a different world.

The set they built in the desert—Mos

YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF HOW CAN I USE MY BODY TO MAKE THIS MOOD COME ACROSS?

make-up and said, "Make me look different." So they made me very dirty and seedy, and George said, "All right, that'll do, walk behind the main characters." So you'll see me sneaking through.

Will you be performing the voice of Wald yourself?

I'm not sure what they're doing. I was speaking the dialogue under the mask. For Jedi, I understand it was an American Indian woman who did my voice. For this one, who knows? Maybe James Earl Jones will do my voice!

Was returning to Star Wars kind of like returning to your childhood?

Yes, it was. The Episode I first assistant director, Chris Newman, was known as the Ewok wrangler on Jedi, because he was responsible for coordinating all of the Ewoks. It was really great.

What was it like filming in Tunisia?

Espa—the things that stood out for me were the moisture vaporators. That was Star Wars for me. I was standing in the middle of a three-dimensional Star Wars. Some people trekked off to try and find the old sets. They were looking for the rock where Ben Kenobi sat. I think they found it. I don't think rocks like that move. Actually, we filmed in a little area called Tataouine. I think that's where George got the idea [for Tatooine].

What is Wald like?

The character is kind of similar to Wicket, being a young character. I think that inquisitiveness of looking at R2-D2 was my own personality coming through in Wicket, and I tried to recreate that with Wald.

Is it difficult to convey those nuances through a mask?

It's a different approach. You don't have your eyes or mouth. You have to ask yourself, "How can I use my body to make this mood come



across?" I started with this walk. I just observed. I thought, what would I pick up on if I was six years old. There is thought that goes in—you can't just throw on a head and stand around there.

How do you deal with the heat inside the costume, especially out in the desert?

In everything you do with a head or where you're enclosed, you're going to get steamy—your own personal sauna. But how it affects you is all in your mind. You just have to chill out with it.

When you first played Wicket, you were 11 years old. What did you think of young Jake Lloyd, with whom you share most of your scenes in the prequel?

He was great. An older actor would have col-



lapsed under the pressure, but every line, he had right. You never had to re-shoot it because Jake didn't get it right. A very nice boy.

Was there as much excitement on the set this time around as there was for *Jedi*?

From my point of view, more excitement, because the *Special Editions* had just come out, so there was a feeling that we were really working on something special. I went to the *Star Wars Special Edition* premiere in London. It was fantastic to sit there in the cinema and watch it again.

Warwick, let's face it: some fans claim that the Ewoks are too cute to be in the *Star Wars* saga. As the cutest Ewok of them all, please set these misguided souls straight.

Well, I can see it from both sides of the coin, but I kind of like Ewoks. I wouldn't be right where I am now if George hadn't thought of Ewoks! But I just like the concept—these little, primitive, peace-loving creatures overthrowing this technologically advanced and totally evil Empire. I think they're fun, and kids love them. The fans have got *The Empire Strikes Back* if they want to get all dark and moody.

Are you still interested in directing?

After *Jedi*, I got really into directing. I bought a video camera and started making home videos, won some competitions. Then I started

taking it seriously, and it became a lot less fun! But I did bring my camera to Tunisia and filmed the drive across the desert.

Tell me about Willow Personal Management.

I started it four years ago with my father-in-law, Peter Burroughs. I have an agent, ICM in London, but by and large there really wasn't any proper representation for short actors in London. They weren't treated as actors—it was just, "We need some dwarves for these shows."

We try to be more personal with it. We

push them for their abilities. We represent over 80 actors, and our only criterion is you must be five feet or under. Basically, all we ask is enthusiasm. I think that's the most important thing in this business.

We had two people in *Star Wars*. One of our clients, Michaela Cottrell played a Jedi Councilor, and Ray Griffiths was the stand-in for Jake Lloyd, and he played "Gonk" [also known as Power Droid]. Officially, he was filmed for a reference scene for a CG character. He was involved in the whole shoot.

Getting that phone call from [casting director] Robin Gurland, I'll never forget—"George would love to talk to you about playing a new character, and I'd love to talk to you about Willow Management and using some of your actors!" I think I probably had the same enthusiasm now that I did back then [for *Jedi*]. It was an honor and a privilege. I was thrilled to get that call.

Have you gotten any calls about Episodes II and III?

I don't know yet. I've made suggestions for characters I could play. I told [casting director] Robin Gurland I'd love to play a baddie! That would be fun. ☺

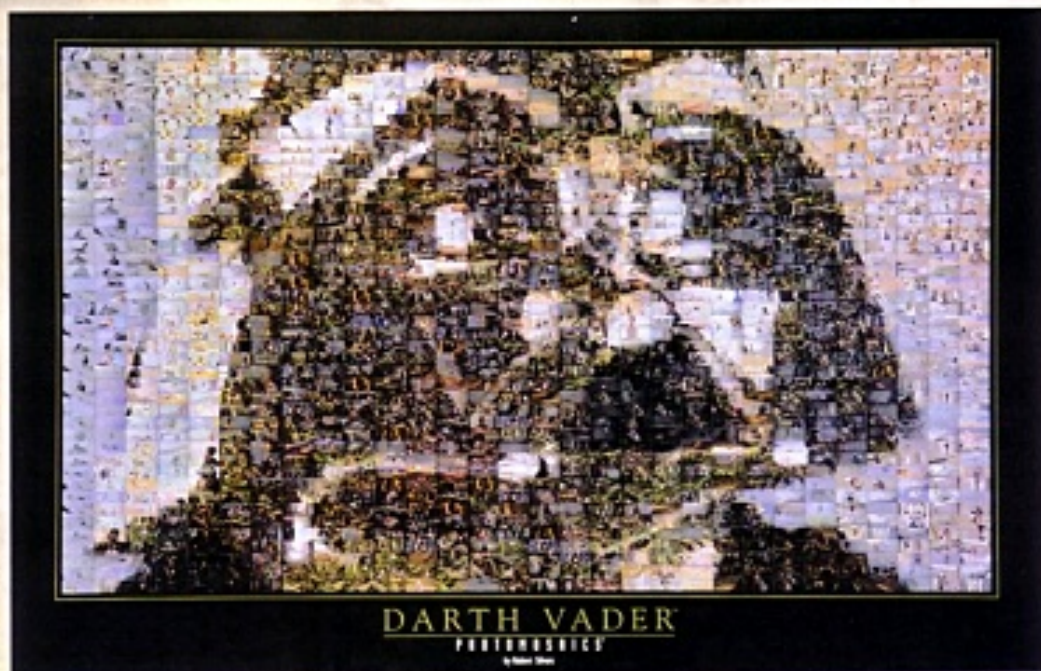
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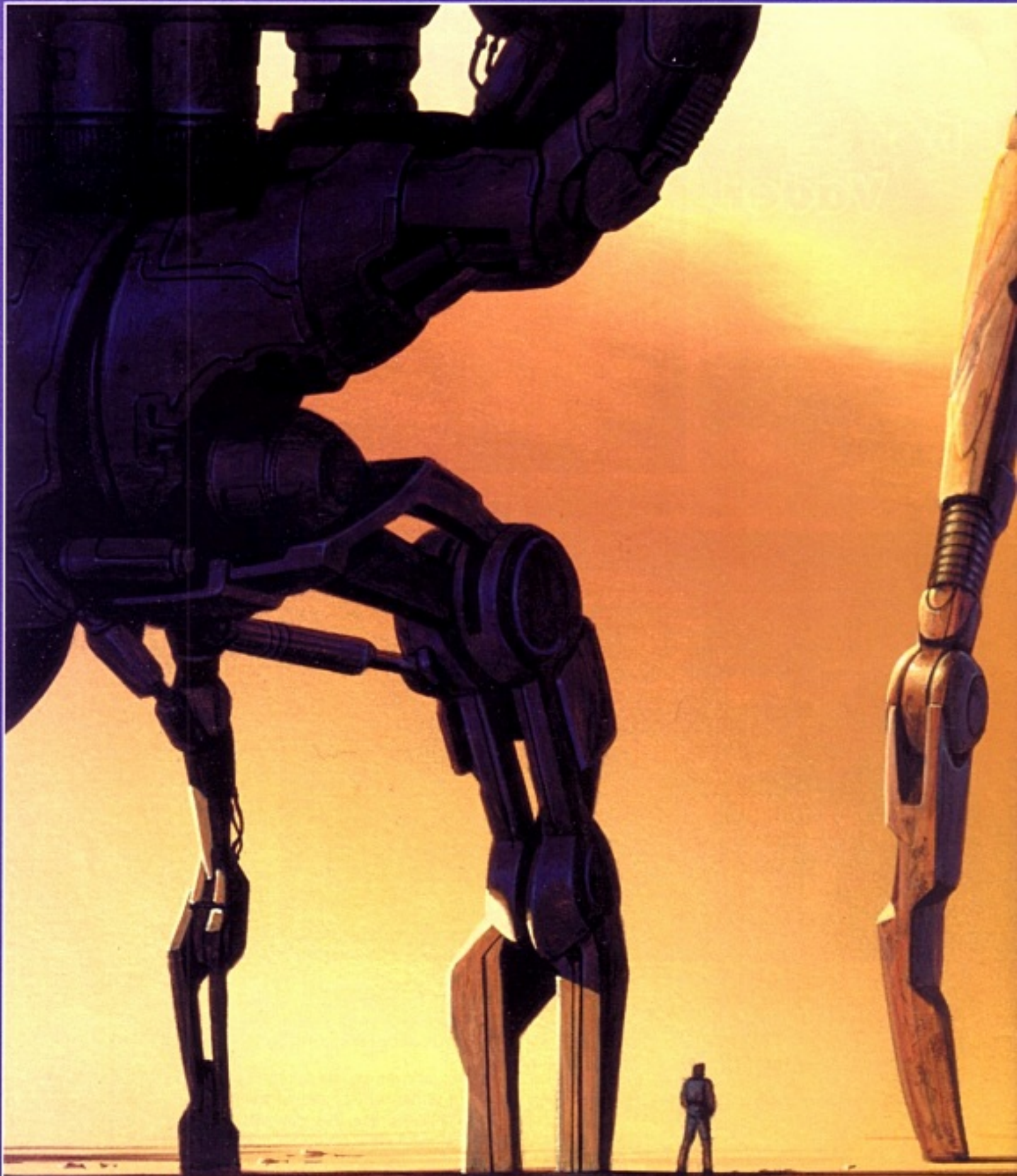
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This personal project depicts an imminent battle between two gladiator robots.

FROM CONCEPT TO SCREEN

by David West Reynolds

A CONVERSATION WITH EPISODE I CONCEPT DESIGNER DOUG CHIANG

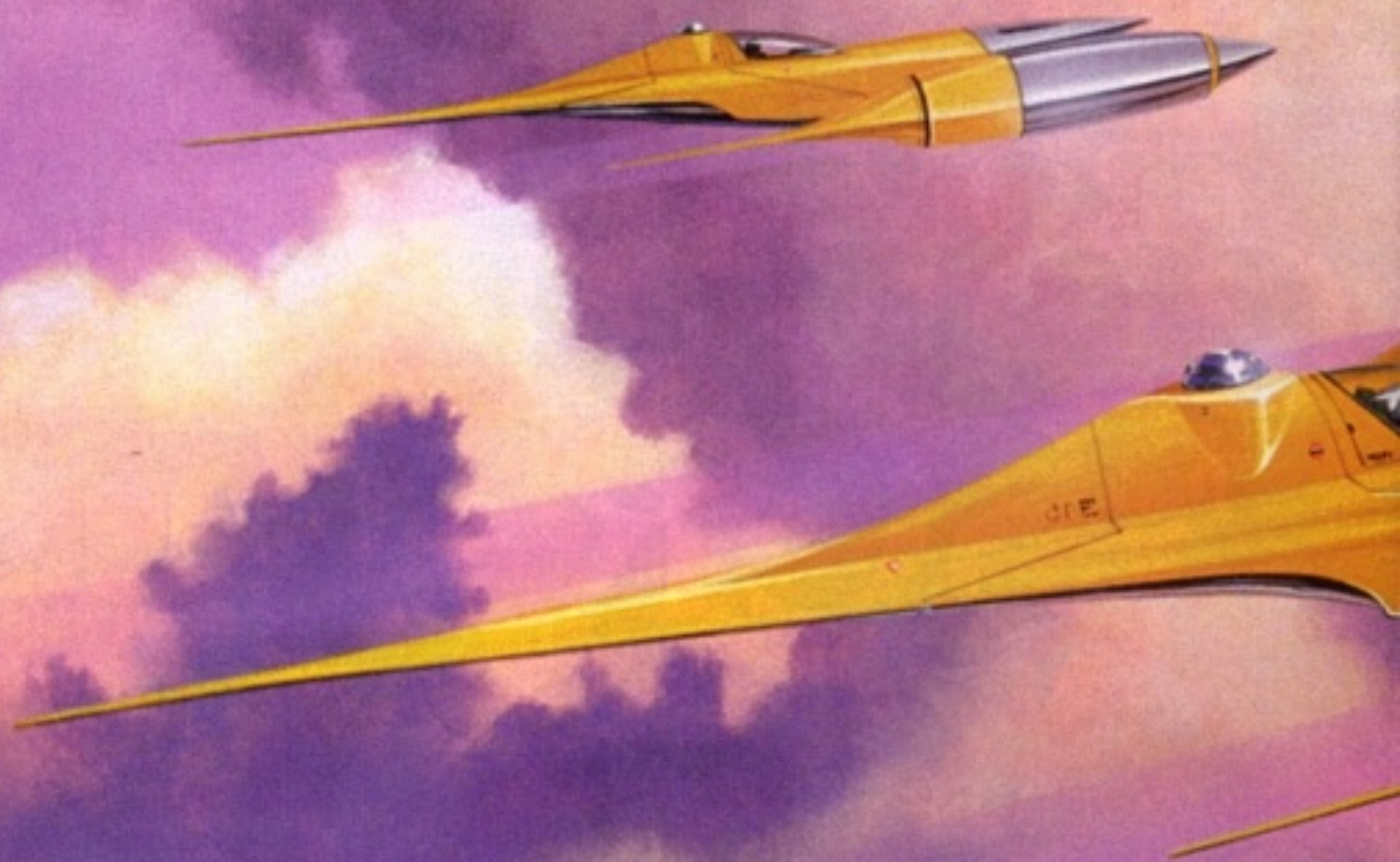
FOLLOWING IN THE BRUSH STROKES OF THE GREAT RALPH McQUARRIE (THE FIRST *STAR WARS* MOVIE'S PRODUCTION ILLUSTRATOR), DOUG CHIANG IS A NEW INFLUENCE IN THE *STAR WARS* UNIVERSE. HIS FRESH EYE AND APPROACH GIVE DISTINCTIVE SHAPE TO THE WORLDS OF *STAR WARS* EPISODE I, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY RESPECTING THE SAGA'S DESIGN TRADITIONS.

In many ways, it appears that Chiang's entire career has been leading up to his present job as head of the Episode I Art Department. Inspired by *Star Wars* in 1977, Chiang broke into the business by working on the television show *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, as well as the films *Terminator 2*, *Jumanji*, *Ghost*, *Back to the Future Part II*, and *The Mask*, before landing his Episode I assignment. He is the winner of an Academy Award for his work on *Death Becomes Her* and a British Academy Award for *Forrest Gump*, as well as advertising's highest award, the Clio, for best art direction.

Today, Chiang directs the art department at Skywalker Ranch and supervises the integration of his team's design work into ILM's visual effects, bringing to his art great respect for his predecessors and a unique style that will distinguish his touch in the *Star Wars* universe. >>



Doug Chiang on the Tatooine set at Leavesden Studios in London.



Sleek starfighters, with their astromech droids firmly in their sockets, speed towards battle in this dramatic production painting by artist Doug Chiang for *Star Wars: Episode I*.



Marker sketch of a spaceship in flight configuration.

Let's start at the beginning. When did you first get interested in art?

Growing up, I was pretty shy and didn't have a lot of friends. I drew as a form of expression and as a way to get attention, but never with the thought of it as a career. In my family there was the expectation that we would all be doctors or engineers or something like that, so art was not

an obvious path ahead. I drew because I enjoyed it and because it allowed me to create my own reality.

When did film come into the picture for you?

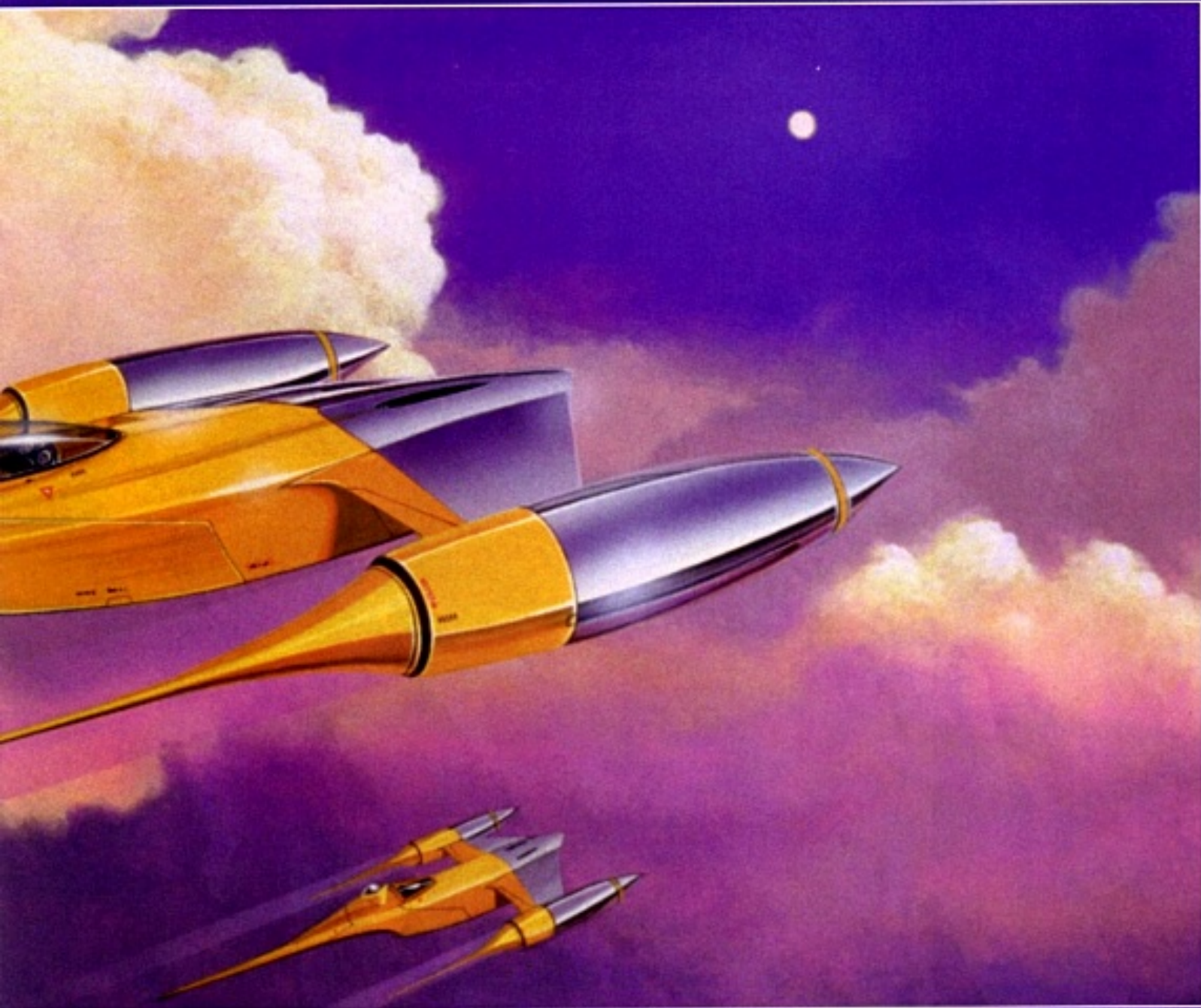
I had always liked science fiction films and monster movies, and my drawing would reflect that. I was introduced to filmmaking in the 7th grade and my interest grew from there. I shot my first film by animating people through a process called pixelation. Then, later in the year, I saw a claymation film, which exposed me to the possibilities of filmmaking without using people as cast members.

I went to the library and got books to learn about animation and, borrowing my dad's Super-8 camera, started making my own films. Filmmaking became a natural extension

for my drawn art. I created miniature sets out of cardboard, and characters out of wire and clay, all in the basement. It was a fun summer. Then came 1977.

How did *Star Wars* strike you when you first saw it?

I was totally blown away like everyone else! At the same time, I also saw a Ray Harryhausen film called *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*. Those two movies solidified my interest and commitment to working in film. The documentary called *The Making of Star Wars* also had a huge influence on me. By this time I had read up about things like traveling mattes, bluescreen, etc., and seeing people demonstrate it made me think that I could do that also—someday.



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Was this still all on your own?

Mostly. I entered one of my films in the Michigan Student Film Festival—I grew up near Detroit—and much to my surprise it took Grand Prize. I was then exposed to the independent film community, where I met a teacher named John Prusak who introduced me to professional film equipment and techniques. He was a great mentor. Then shortly

thereafter, I got seriously ill and spent the next year and a half in the hospital after complications following abdominal surgeries. That experience changed my outlook on life.

What effect did your illness have on you?

Before, my world was wide open, and I would rush into projects. Afterwards, I became more cautious and wanted to pre-plan everything.

The time in the hospital made me more conscious that things might not work out, that there might be failures. It also changed my view of art and film. Individual works seemed much more precious. Art became more of a struggle.

So let's hear about how you got from the hospital to film school.

After my recovery, John Prusak helped me make my first 16mm films. I still wanted to be



Marker detail of spaceport nose section.



This reptilian commander with headset is another of Chiang's personal projects.

an animator and enrolled at UCLA to study film. I created a film called *Mental Block*. I entered that in the Nissan FOCUS Awards, and it took first place in the Animation & Experimental category. It was great—first prize was a car!

After that, I interviewed for a storyboard position with a company called Digital Productions but instead was offered a position of Art Director/Designer. They were an exciting new company doing amazing CG work, which was still relatively obscure at that time. I was soon designing and directing TV logos and commercials. I had little formal training in art, having taken about 3 classes in college. So it was rather ironic that my first professional film experience resulted from my art skills.

In this professional environment, however, I was really intimidated by the people I was working with. The high pressure environment exposed me to great artists with great talents and I learned fast. I had to. This became my mini art school. It was at this time that I realized that my path to filmmaking would have to be through art.

This was all just preparation for *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*, though, right?

Actually, no. I was just starting my career when Digital Productions closed down. I was suddenly out of a job. It was 1987. Through contacts that I had made, I heard that the second season of *Pee-Wee's Playhouse* was in production and that they were looking for stop motion animators. I interviewed, showing my college film, and got the job.

It was just like doing my old Super-8 movies I did as a kid, only with a budget! Fast paced work, an episode a week, all first takes, no time for re-shoots. It was a very instructive process and we had a small, wonderful crew—a mini-Hollywood. I really enjoyed it.

What part of the show did you do?

We had three animation groups on the show, and I was the key animator for the Fridge sequences. It was very free and creative. Paul Reubens was great to work with.

From *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*, it must have been a cinch to walk into ILM.

Not exactly! After *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*, I returned to Computer Graphics and worked for Rhythm and Hues (which later won an Oscar for *Babe*) for about a year. Longing to work on major film productions, I started improving my skills during my off hours. Finally, I left and got a job as a conceptual designer for *Back to the Future Part 2*. On that show I designed props

and whatever was needed. It was a humbling experience, but inspiring, because again, there were so many great people to learn from. I really realized that my art skills needed improving and regretted not going to art school. So I practiced more. Then Steve Beck, who was then the head of ILM's art department, contacted me for a three-week project that ultimately turned into a full-time job.

What was it like to reach ILM at last?

It was the most incredible thing in the world. It

interested! I started to assemble a portfolio like everyone else.

What kind of work did you put together for this momentous portfolio?

I tried to guess what would work. Should I slant my work toward material that looked like the earlier *Star Wars*, or should I demonstrate my own style? I submitted a mix. I also included a variety of media—traditional paintings, digital paintings, and sketches. I figured that the three different disciplines would broaden my



... I WAS THE KEY ANIMATOR FOR THE FRIDGE SEQUENCES [ON *PEE-WEE'S PLAYHOUSE*] IT WAS VERY FREE AND CREATIVE. PAUL REUBENS WAS GREAT TO WORK WITH.

was mind-blowing. Here I was surrounded by all the names I had read about and looked up to. They were the best of the best and I figured if I could associate and perform at their level, I would finally achieve what I had aspired to as a kid growing up in Michigan after seeing *Star Wars* the first time.

All this time, I was trying to find my own style. At home I would work on my own subjects to develop in my own directions, and painting, because I wasn't doing that at ILM. I made a pact with myself to do a new project a week at home, trying new techniques and new subjects. Each painting was a new exploration. I wanted to build myself for the right project when it came, and I kept up the pace to increase my confidence. I was really pushing myself with this, because after four years at ILM I was waiting for a transition. And then Episode I came along.

How did you get the job for Episode I?

The word came down that George was looking for a new *Star Wars* art department for Episode I. There was a huge call for portfolios. It went out to art schools nationwide, to designers in Los Angeles, to everywhere. You could just see the ripples go through ILM. Of course I was

chances of being accepted. When I finally submitted it, I had this great sense of relief.

You weren't nervous about entering the race for Episode I?

By the time I finished my portfolio, I was actually at peace with the prospect, because I knew I had prepared myself the best I could. I spent three weeks drawing like mad for the portfolio,





From top to bottom: a personal holiday card, a guard costume design, and a robotic beast of burden.

refining and improving. And at the end I thought I could live with rejection if it happened, because I had given it my best shot.

So what happened next?

I got a call from Rick McCallum, saying that he wanted me to interview. I had no idea how many other people they were interviewing, whether there was a big crowd in line. I went and did the interview with Rick, hoping that I had made the first cut, but instead he offered me a position to oversee and put together the Episode I art department.

I couldn't believe it. However, I was a bit concerned. I didn't know what he meant, whether he just wanted me to be the manager, so I finally had to ask, "But I get to design, right?" And he said, "Absolutely!" After that I drove home with the biggest grin on my face.

What kind of pressure do you face, being in charge of the art department for Episode I?

People have asked me about the pressure, and it is intense, but I would expect nothing less. This movie is the whole reason I'm in this business. I have spent so many years gearing up for this, preparing, gaining experience, for exactly this. So sure, there are tremendous, intimidating pressures, but how can I complain? I'm living my dream.

OK, but it had to be tough to get going on this from scratch.

Well, actually, the first couple of months were sheer hell. [Laughs] There was so much expectation, at least in my mind. I felt that there was no way I could live up to my predecessors: Ralph McQuarrie, Joe Johnston—there was no way. I only hoped that I would disappoint only a few people and not the entire *Star Wars* contingent—especially George!

What has surprised you the most in this job?

I have learned so much from George about film design, rather than just design. There are different concerns in film. George looks at the work, elaborate work, and dismisses things in ten seconds. He doesn't want explanations when he reviews concepts - it just goes up on the board and it either reads or it dies. It has to be bold, or it doesn't work. This was a big lesson for me.

In design, I get tied up in details, like the workings of a mechanical joint; I'm fascinated with working everything out functionally. Intricate work can add up to a good design for me. But film design is about overall visual impact, and how well a design propels the



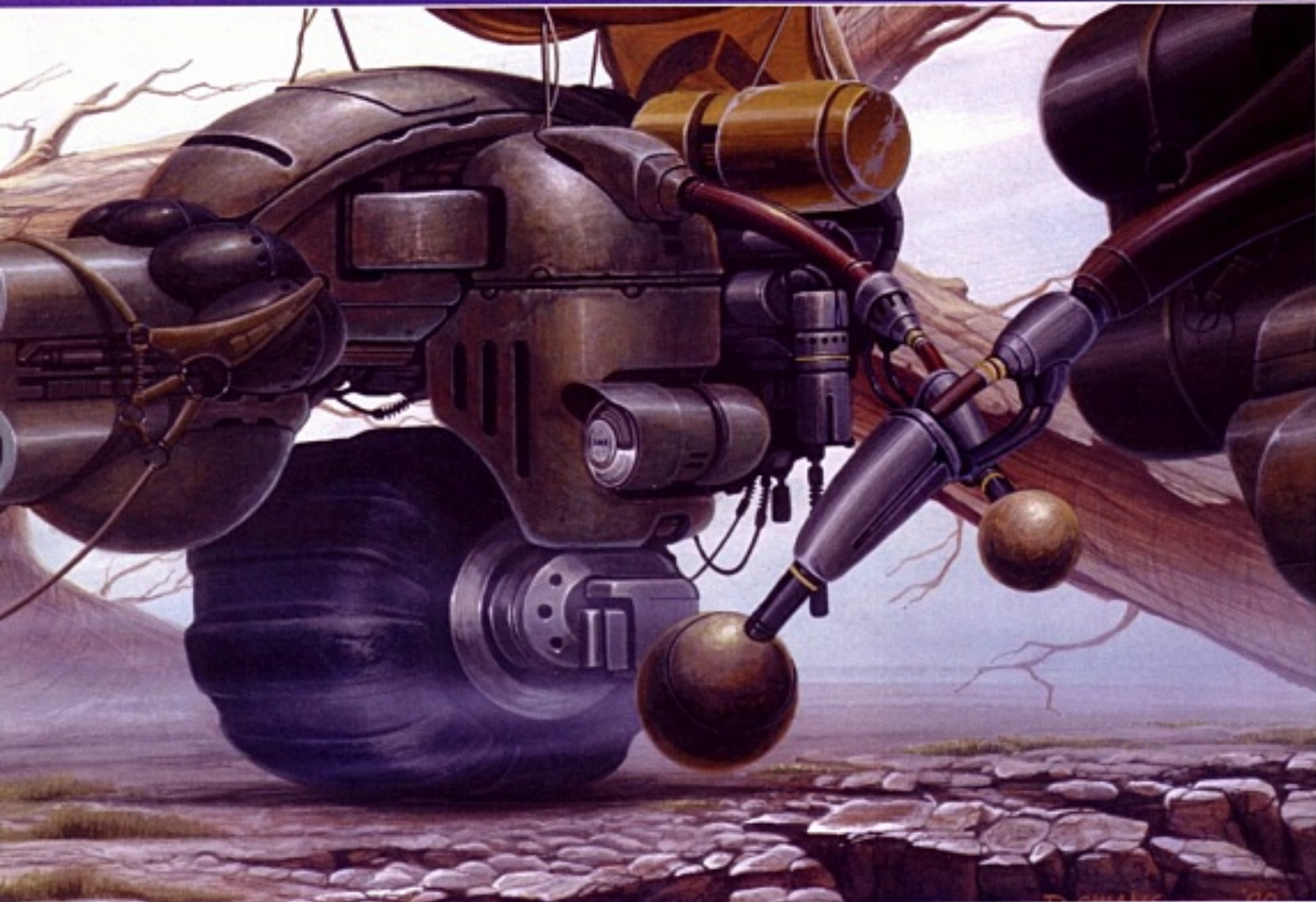
A lone scout with armored uni-pod transport are depicted in this personal project by Chiang.

story. It has to work in five seconds. The audience is not going to hear your explanation about why it's a good design or how it works or what it means. Coming to understand that fact made a big difference in how I design.

What were some milestones in your Episode I adventure?

Painting was a big milestone. For six months, I drew and drew, and finally felt that George was liking what he was seeing. It was time for me to take a chance, and find out, could I do a painting like Ralph? We hadn't discussed it, but I decided to take the plunge. It was time to try a real production painting.

I picked an easy, comfortable subject, and painted it in my evenings, so no one would know if it didn't work out. After three nights, I was looking at it and I hated it. I must have painted it over three more times before the color, lighting, and composition began to work. Even then I had to get up my nerve to show it to George. Well, he liked it. But my confidence was so shaken, I wondered whether he was just being kind.



Doug Chiang at Skywalker Ranch.

You thought he was just being polite?

I guess it was just Ralph's looming shadow. I couldn't believe that my work was really good enough. But then I decided to try again, this time I would try and paint one of the key images that George liked. A big disaster! I thought, 'My God, they're going to fire me or at least take my brushes away.' I was only into the painting two days and it was the worst thing I had ever done—seriously! After much agonizing, I decided that I needed to stop painting for a month and go "back to school." I bought three of the best books I could find on color theory, acrylic paints, and lighting, and I re-taught myself to paint.

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ABOUT FILM DESIGN, RATHER THAN JUST DESIGN...
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I had developed so many bad habits from my painting style. These books showed me the fundamentals, how to use color effectively, basic principles that I had never really understood from trial and error methods—simple things like the importance of preliminary color sketches to work out your problems early. And this made a huge difference. When I finally painted again, it came much easier. Even though painting can still be a struggle, it is much more enjoyable these days.

It appears you've succeeded in creating a new design aesthetic for the Episode I vision of Star Wars.

I've always looked up to Ralph and Joe and Nilo (Rodis-Jamero, an *Empire Strikes Back* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* artist), and always will, but this is a new project, and while I am still learning, there's no more need to emulate the masters. It's new territory and I only hope that the work we do in the art department will live up to our predecessors. ☺

Read more about the influences that shaped Doug Chiang's Episode I artwork—and see some of his pre-Star Wars portfolio—in part two of David West Reynolds's interview, only at the official Star Wars Web site, www.starwars.com

MARA JADE

by Peet Janes

WHO NEEDS MOVIES TO BE A STAR?



Few characters in the wider *Star Wars* universe have ever been able to break through to the same level of appreciation that fans have for the core, classic characters from the original film trilogy. When one does, it is a testament to the strength of the character, and strength, as all of Mara Jade's fans agree, is something she possesses in abundance.

Mara Jade first appeared in the pages of Timothy Zahn's bestselling *Heir to the Empire*, the novel often credited with the magnificent modern revival of *Star Wars*. Here was a character that had enormous potential the moment she stepped into Talon Karrde's office "with catlike grace." Through Zahn's *Thrawn* trilogy, Jade evolves into a formidable character in her own right, a secretive, intuitive operator upon whose agenda rests nothing less than the fate of the last Jedi Knight.

Readers were bound to her character indelibly when it was revealed that she had an agenda for the death of Luke Skywalker, and that her secret past, only revealed through

shadowy flashbacks, was at least as interesting and exciting as a Tatooine farmboy's adventures. Readers' bonds only grew with Zahn's further novels *Dark Force Rising*, *The Last Command*, and more recently, *Specter of the Past*. Without a doubt, Mara Jade has become a source of great enjoyment for many *Star Wars* fans, encouraging endless speculation and continuing fascination.

Now Mara Jade truly steps into the spotlight with her own all-new Dark Horse miniseries, the August 1998, *Mara Jade: By the Emperor's Hand*, named for a period when Mara was a ruthless weapon against enemies of the Empire who were left in the lurch after Emperor Palpatine's death.

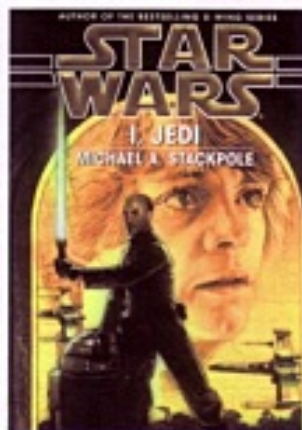
Mara Jade was not added to the publishing schedule until very recently. Originally, Dark Horse planned to release a miniseries to fill in the gaps between Zahn's *Specter of the Past* and *Visions of the Future*. The idea was that during their year-long wait for *Visions*, fans would have *Specter of Thrawn*, a bridging miniseries scripted by Michael Stackpole, to keep them busy.

But unlike the planned story gaps in 1995's *Shadows of the Empire*, which allowed

space for comics and games to tell portions of the story, *Specter of the Past* and *Visions of the Future* are a complete story. "Tim Zahn turns out really tight stories, without those annoying little loose ends that readers all wish would be tied up somehow," says Stackpole. "In fact, tying up such things was what I think everyone figured we'd be able to do with the *Specter of Thrawn* series, but they just weren't there, and the main characters are scheduled well, so there's no slop time there, either." Even less room was left for the sort of action that best propels a good comic book.

Around the time Stackpole was having trouble developing the *Specter of Thrawn* series, editor Bob Cooper made a casual comment in the letters column for Dark Horse's first issue of the adaptation of Zahn's *The Last Command*: what would fans think of a Mara Jade comics project?

The response was





Cover art by Kilian Plunkett for the first issue of the new comic-book series, and from *I, Jedi* by Drew Struzan (opposite).

nothing short of amazing. Fans had already been writing in droves concerning Mara Jade's appearance in *The Last Command* and the previous adaptations of *Dark Force Rising* and *Heir to the Empire*, and now they all wrote again, with very specific requests about who could write or illustrate her, and how. Virtually every email requested Timothy Zahn or Michael Stackpole as scripters.

Stackpole, already working on the now-scratched *Specter of Thrawn*, simply switched course from *Specter* to Mara, and then it was only a matter of contacting Zahn and developing his interest in a Mara Jade miniseries.

"I have to admit that my first thought when the Mara comic was proposed was, 'YES!'" says Zahn, "not because Mara was getting special recognition or anything like that, but because the series would mean I'd get to do more writing about her. It's always very gratifying for an author when one of his or her characters hits that magic resonance with the readers, the resonance that creates a living, breathing person out of words on a page. It's been clear since Mara Jade first appeared in *Heir to the Empire* that she was one of those special characters—love her or hate her, she is apparently difficult to simply ignore."

With Zahn's enthusiastic participation assured, Dark Horse began to move forward on



Mara embodies the '90s ideal woman. I love that she has Han's roguish air, Leia's defiance, and both Vader's ties to the dark side and his hope for redemption from it.

—SARAH KABALA, MARA JADE FAN

the project. Zahn continues, "You have to understand that I was the very first *Star Wars* reader she hit that magic resonance with, and I always enjoy spending time with the lady. And of course, there's so much about Mara's life that hasn't yet been told. I'm looking forward to the chance to fill in a little of that picture with this series." Zahn will be plotting the

miniseries and Stackpole will be scripting, although there may also be an opportunity for Zahn to script as well.

What is it about Mara Jade that makes her so popular? Part of her strength is how she evokes so many different reactions. "Beauty, wit, attitude, determination," says Mara Jade fan Sarah Kabala, who runs the character's fan website. "Mara embodies the '90s ideal woman. I love that she has Han's roguish air, Leia's defiance, and both Vader's ties to the dark side and his hope for redemption from it. I love that she is a gray character, torn between good and evil. It's this deepset flaw that makes her so intriguing, so real. Against all odds, she broke free from her bondage to the dark side. That hard-fought transformation is what makes her so admirable."

Other fans, like 20-year *Star Wars* fan Vincent Scott, appreciate her for the completeness with which she steps into the *Star Wars* universe. "It's like this with a lot of Zahn's characters," Scott says. "You read about them in the novel or see them in the comics, and they fit right into the original vision. But Mara Jade doesn't simply fit in; she's a star."

It wasn't hard to convince Dark Horse or Lucas Licensing that this project was a good idea. As many of

the characters grow in the books, comics, and games, they develop lives of their own, likely paths that they will follow. Attaching Mara Jade's creator—and two of the most popular *Star Wars* novelists—to the project should insure that it will give readers exactly what they want.

Reader response has often been a strong

indicator of what will fly and what will fail in comics, and while other comics featuring female star characters can be a hard sell, the rule does not necessarily apply to *Star Wars* comics. Witness the recent success of Guri the replicant droid's star turn in *Shadows of the Empire: Evolution*.

But Mara Jade's fans demand an even finer craft. "Mara Jade has very dedicated fans who are ready to flense authors who don't get her right," says Stackpole, joking. "Did I mention I'm planning to move to Mars if they don't like her appearances in *I, Jedi*?"

"Frankly, I agree with her fans," Stackpole continues. "Her characterization in some novels hasn't read right to me. From the writer's point of view, I know she's a complicated character who is difficult to get right. For that reason I'm glad that Tim's vetted the Mara scenes I've written, and that he's the driving force behind the comics miniseries. He's laying in the course, all I have to do is follow the map, which is going to be a lot of fun."

Writing in the *Star Wars* universe, whether comics or novels, requires cooperation. The continuity has become rich and complex, but it's a double-edged sword that demands patience, time, and energy to make certain that the continuity remains coherent. A failure to faithfully follow the continuity diffuses the greater *Star Wars* picture, which is the driving reason for many fans' involvement. Fortunately, Stackpole and Zahn

work well together, showing mutual respect for each other's work.

"Tim and I work similarly enough that understanding each other's characters is pretty easy," says Stackpole. "The characters he creates aren't necessarily characters I'd create, so working with his folks means I've really got to stretch as a writer, which is very good. As for

the sharing of ideas, Tim's said it best when he notes that a call that begins with 'Hey, I've got a quick question for you,' ends up an hour later with a short story or novel plotline or comic series all outlined and ready to go. Getting to know Tim and working with him has been one of the unexpected rewards of working in the *Star Wars* universe."

So, what exactly are the plans for Mara Jade? Fans seem evenly split between wanting to see more of her back story or her origin, and wanting to leave it a mystery. Zahn and Stackpole, both keyed into fan opinion through frequent signing appearances and the Internet, are taking everything into consideration, and guarantee that the project will meet with fans' approval.

Without revealing too much, Zahn says, "This series will cover the time period around the Battle of Endor, showing Mara's sudden transition from the power and status of being the Emperor's Hand to the aloneness and utter vulnerability of being a political outcast on the run. Against this backdrop will be the story of her last assignment as Emperor's Hand, and how she must work on her own after Palpatine's death to complete it." ☾

Mara Jade: By the Emperor's Hand

is scheduled for an August 1998 release, with plots by Timothy Zahn, scripts by Michael Stackpole, interior art by Carlos Ezquerro, and covers by Kilian Plunkett.



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—MICHAEL STACKPOLE, AUTHOR

RAISING THE STAR WARS FLAG

RECALLING A PAINFUL MEMORY, AND WHY I COLLECT.

by Steve Sansweet

Now that we're less than a year away from the release of *Star Wars: Episode I*, I am being asked the same puzzling question, with more and more frequency, by well-meaning acquaintances, friends, and even a few collectors. In its most basic form, it goes like this: "Are you going to collect stuff from the prequels, or are you going to just stick to the classic line?"

After all, I've been collecting *Star Wars* now for 21 years, so aren't I just a bit burned out? I've had to add one floor, then a second, onto my Los Angeles house, and I'm out of room yet again. I've rented one, then two, now four, personal storage lockers for the overflow, and they're all full. I've devoted a large percentage of my income to collecting—including refinancing the house three times (or was it four?)—so might this be a good time to slow down?

To me, the questions indicate some lack of understanding of the nature of collecting. In fact, Mary Ann Gilderbloom, a senior publicist for Chronicle Books, challenged me to help promote my new *Star Wars Scrapbook: The*



The very rare National Screen Service *Star Wars* banner.

I can't speak for those who collect, say, barbed wire or even Barbie dolls. But for me, collecting *Star Wars* memorabilia has always been great fun. I've written many times of the worldwide friendships it has brought me, leading me to far-off lands I probably never would have gotten around to visiting. Who knew I would find kindred spirits in Australia, or such

saga of Anakin and the Skywalker clan. Stop collecting in the middle of the story? Never! I'm just getting my second wind. Now on to some more urgent queries...

Salute the Flag

I've been a *Star Wars* fan and collector ever since I saw the movie opening day in 1977, but there's one piece of my collection that I'm writing to you about. For Christmas, 1978, I received a *Star Wars* banner that was hung in a movie theater. It is 8 feet long and 2 feet wide and was made by the National Flag & Banner Display Co. of New York. It seems to be made of tough nylon with the picture silk-screened and fringe sewn to the bottom.

It's really beautiful!

I recently called the company and all they could tell me was that it was custom made for promotion of the movie. I have brought it to several conventions and toy fairs and no one has ever seen another or knows anything about it or its value. Please help!

ROB DONADIO Lodi, NJ

I can't speak for those who collect, say barbed wire or even Barbie dolls. But for me, collecting *Star Wars* memorabilia has always been great fun.

—STEVE SANSWEET

Essential Collection, by answering the following: "Just what makes a person keep all of that stuff?"

Well, Mary Ann and all you other interrogators, the answer is fairly simple: Love. Passion. Excitement in the search—as well as the acquisition. A deep connection with one of the true cultural phenomena of the late 20th Century.

cool amigos in Mexico City? How could I guess that I would gain a second "family" after just a couple of weeks in Italy, and lifelong friends in Japan, Canada, and many other places?

Sever those connections? It would be like severing a limb (which does happen with some regularity in our favorite trilogy). Anyway, as George Lucas has said, the prequels and the existing films are all part of one epic tale, the



A true treasure. A hand-assembled booklet of 25 hand-printed photos (examples at left) signed by George Lucas and Gary Kurtz (inset).



I'm happy to help, although it recalls a somewhat painful story. What you have is the very rare National Screen Service "silk" banner that was offered by NSS—which was a sort of clearing house for the industry—to first-run movie houses in 1977 along with posters, lobby cards, standees and other promotional material. The banner was sold to theater owners for the princely sum of around \$29, a bit steep in the days when theater managers could get a lot of other promotional material for free or just a couple of bucks. It's listed in the second edition of Tomart's Price Guide to Worldwide Star Wars Collectibles as item PQ6300, \$1,250 to \$2,000.

The painful memory is of my year-long negotiations with a former theater owner to buy one of these mint beauties for less than the ridiculous price he was asking, and then ending up being hijacked for more because he could see how much I wanted it. (Also, his ads in a movie poster publication seeking more such banners had brought no response.) A few years later, one in used condition sold for a tenth what I had paid—but I've never seen another until your photograph arrived. Mine is proudly displayed in a nine foot long Plexiglas box.

Why did Prices Go Up?

Today, as I was buying a few Royal Guards and Snowtroopers for my collection, I noticed that the register rang up \$5.99 each.

I wonder if you could shed some light on the pride of my *Star Wars* collection. It is a spiral bound booklet of 8-by-10 inch black and white photos from the production of the first film.

—MATT COLLINS, CORNWALL, UK

Just a few days ago the price was only \$4.99 per action figure. I was upset over this new price hike overnight.

I went to a few Toys 'R' Us stores and asked the managers for the reasoning behind the hike, but they said they didn't know. I called the Hasbro/Kenner consumer line and talked to someone who said they didn't have any knowledge of the increase. So I ask you: Why was the price raised from, \$4.99 to \$5.99 on *Star Wars* figures? Good luck in trying to get an answer from anyone.

MICHAEL MARGANO Bronx, NY

I'm sorry that you couldn't find anyone to answer your very legitimate question. It would have been much better if toy store managers or owners and telephone representatives could have been briefed in advance, but while some people in those positions could have answered your question, the folks you talked to could not. Hasbro says that it hadn't raised figure prices in several years, even as its manufacturing, distribu-

tion and marketing costs increased. It waited to raise unit prices by \$1 each until it had something of added value to offer: the Freeze Frame action slides. In an ideal world, only those figures with the slides would have cost more, but that's apparently difficult to do with the complex computer and distribution programs used by major retailers. And in June, many stores ran promotions reducing prices of the older figures by as much as \$2.00.

Priceless Photo Album

I wonder if you could shed some light on the pride of my *Star Wars* collection. It is a spiral bound booklet of 8-by-10-inch black-and-white photos from the production of the first film. It was generously given to me by a relative's neighbor in 1983. On the inside cover is the following hand-written message: "Phillip Macdonald, Thank you for your contribution to *Star Wars*." It is signed by George Lucas and Gary Kurtz.

I remember Mr. Macdonald telling me that the booklet was given to him by George



A Cantina Band Member with two right hands.

Lucas and that it was one of only thirty made. Is there any more information you could add to this? What would its value be? Also, I have never seen Phillip Macdonald's name in the film credits. Do you know what the contribution is that is mentioned in the inscription?

MATT COLLINGS Bodmin, Cornwall, UK

As a kid, I often checked out a book from the school library. It told the story of Chewbacca, his family and their home planet. What was this book and where can I get a copy?
—LUKE WEAVER, AUGUSTA, GA

Matt possesses a true treasure. The plastic spiral-bound booklet contains 25 hand-printed, vellum-finished photos, some of which I've seen nowhere else except in this hand-assembled booklet. Besides the set photos, there is one behind-the-scenes photo and one monochromatic reproduction of a Ralph McQuarrie production painting. The black matte cover is graced by a sticker with early McQuarrie artwork for "The Star Wars."

The booklets were ordered up as special gifts by producer Kurtz, who once told me that less than 200 were made. It's possible that only 30 or so were autographed like Matt's copy. It's very hard to set a price on something like this, because it really is auction material.

As for Mr. Macdonald, I was originally stumped. But thanks to Lucasfilm film archivist Tim Fox, who dug up a 22-year-old Construction Unit List for Star Wars, Phillip Macdonald was a member of the prop department for the first film. So now we all know. What a great job that must have been!

Do they have plans to make a set of figures of the Max Rebo Band. They made the Cantina Band members, but the Max Rebo Band is one of my favorite things in Return of the Jedi.

—ANDREW LEE, SHONIS, IN

None Are Left

I am writing concerning a figure I bought. It's a Cantina Band Member with all the different instruments but with one minor difference: it has two right hands. I was wondering about the value of such a figure.

DAN GUGISBERG Missoula, MT

People who don't dance very well are said to have two left feet, and the same probably applies to musicians with two right hands. It's an assembly error. If you sat there all day sticking thousands of tiny hands into thousands of tiny arms, you might also goof up on one or two. Since the figure isn't sealed on a blister card, and any of us could do the same thing with any of our band members, it's additional value is zero. In fact, if you want to return it, I'm sure the friendly folks at

scout out dealers at shows, stores or on the Internet to find one. One possibility is amazon.com, which will ask sellers of used books if they have a copy for sale, although the price is liable to be considerably higher than guide. As for the wretched "Holiday Special" itself, the answer is ... highly unlikely.

Rebo Man

I have a short question to ask, but I would really like an answer. Do they have plans to make a set of figures of the Max Rebo Band? They made the Cantina Band members, but the Max Rebo Band is one of my favorite things in Return of the Jedi.

ANDREW LEE Shoals, IN



Chewbacca and family from the "Star Wars Holiday Special".

the Jawa Trader would oblige. Such errors rarely add to the value of a toy and often detract.

Wookiee Book

As a kid, I often checked out a book from the school library. It told the story of Chewbacca, his family and their home planet. What was this book and where can I get a copy? The planet was also seen on "The Star Wars Holiday Special." Any plans to release that on video?

LUKE WEAVER Augusta, GA

Luke, who notes that he was born exactly one month before Star Wars opened in theaters, is recalling The Wookiee Storybook, which had a bright orange cover and cost \$3.95 when it came out in 1979. The book's uncredited author based part of the story on bits from the "Holiday Special," and illustrator Patricia Wynne based some of her beautiful paintings on the show's characters and settings, especially the tree cities of Kashyyyk. The book is listed in the latest Tomart guide at only \$5 to \$12, but you need to

I have a short answer: Yes! Hasbro/Kenner is releasing three different Max Rebo Band Pairs as two-packs at most Wal-Mart stores. You've probably already seen Droopy McCool and Barquin D'an, to be followed by Sy Snootles and Joh Yowzah, and then Max Rebo and Dada Bodonaweedoh. They really, uh, rock! 🤖

Please send your questions and comments about collectibles to SCOUTING THE GALAXY, Dept. SWI, P.O. Box 291609, Los Angeles, CA 90029. Individual replies aren't possible because of time constraints, but we'll answer the questions of broadest interest in the column. Letters are edited for grammar, sense and length.

With a little help from Kenner, photographer Armado M. Gutierrez interprets scenes from *Star Wars* and *Return of the Jedi* (below and bottom right)



>> Rebel Rumbings

continued from page 9

the Ten Commandments! These stories are not written in stone. They are simply another author's interpretation of the *Star Wars* universe, and should only be regarded as that. If fans are hungry for science fiction, they should instead read the works of real SF writers, such as Ray Bradbury or Lester del Rey, not those who base their work on another.

KEVIN DONDANVILLE Bellevue, WA

Here we go again—another person telling us what a “real *Star Wars* fan” should think and do. Like I said in the last issue, if half the letters we get that refer to “real fans” are right, it’s a wonder somebody like me (apparently not a real fan) ascended to the position of managing editor of the *Insider*. Kevin, while I agree with you that *Star Wars* books are merely authors’ interpretations of the *Star Wars* universe, your opinions might carry more weight if you had actually read any of the books you say are so terrible. Maybe then you’d see why Mara Jade is a favorite of so many fans, even though she never appeared in a movie. Or maybe you wouldn’t—but either way, believe it or not, the writers authorized to write *Star Wars* novels are part of George Lucas’ “team of artists.” Here’s one more opinion on the poll.

What is wrong with you?! I am talking about your character popularity contest. Why any one in their right mind would choose Han Solo over the overwhelmingly awesome Luke Skywalker is simply inconceivable to me. I am wondering if you people at the

Insider are totally stupid or just blind. Mark Hamill is a much better actor than Harrison Ford was. How could you people choose Han over Luke? He’s much more popular with the girls (and boys) and so many more people relate to him. You people are so stupid it scares me. Hoping that the Force will never be with you,

TASHA VAN GARSSE Sycamore, IL

Let’s think about the **1,523 men and women** who went down with the *Titanic*, not about what is number one **at the box office.**

—CATHY WESLING, Indianapolis, IN

Tasha, Jedi must learn to control their anger. I hope you’re aware that the character rankings were determined by readers’ votes, not by the *Insider* staff—did you vote? However, in answer to your question, we at the *Insider* are neither stupid nor blind, but we are greasy and overweight. Does that count for anything?

Iceberg! Part 2

Since I discovered your magazine a few years ago, I have steadily enjoyed it. Yet for the first time, I found something that did not agree with me. In Issue 38, I read the letters in the “Iceberg” column, and I was embarrassed by the lack of maturity these fans expressed. I myself am an avid *Star Wars* fan, and I saw *Titanic*. I enjoyed it very much. It is a fine piece of film, and its success at the box office does not make *Star Wars* any less great. *Star Wars*’

greatness is not in the bank, but in the hearts and souls of its fans. I would urge those who condemn *Titanic* to grow up a little and go enjoy it. I doubt George Lucas, who seems to enjoy others’ success, would approve of their childish behavior.

J. MICHAEL HUFF Mt. Vernon, WA

I read “Rebel Rumbings” (Issue 38) and could not believe what I read on the movie *Titanic*. I could not believe how many selfish readers there are out there. *Star Wars* and *Titanic* should not be compared with one another. The two movies are excellent. Let’s think about the 1,523 men and women who went down with the *Titanic*—not about what is number one at the box office.

CATHY WESLING, Indianapolis, IN

Well said, Cathy and J. Michael. They are just movies, after all. Here’s one last letter on the subject...

OK, I admit it. I love *Star Wars*, yet I saw *Titanic*. I feel no shame that I paid money to see the film that bumped *Star Wars* out of the #1 of all-time spot. Nor do I feel guilty, since our local theater did not get *Titanic* until after it had overthrown the greatest movie of all time.





The teeming metropolis of Mos Eisley comes to life, thanks to these photos (above and facing page) of Kenner figures inhabiting the miniature Tatooine created by Jay Weber, Nate Annen, and Jason Martin.

To all those people who think **STAR WARS** fans who saw **TITANIC** are evil, I say "Don't give in to hate. That leads to the dark side."

—HERMAN TORRES, Mayfield, KY

Call me a turncoat or traitor all you want, but I, too, enjoyed *Titanic*. The computer effects were very well-done, and no self-respecting movie fan can or should deny this. It was a good movie.

Was it better than *Star Wars*? To me, of course not! To others, it may very well be better. To those people who think *Star Wars* fans that saw *Titanic* are evil, I say, "Don't give in to hate. That leads to the dark side." Besides, if tradition holds true, *Star Wars* will get a chance to take the spot back next year around March.

Every time a new *Star Wars* movie came out, the first one was re-released a few months prior. No reason to stop this tradition now!

Before I go, I must say that I loved the cover illustration of the *Star Wars* and *Simpsons* characters merged. Is there a chance that either the cover art or the "Bart Wars" art will be made into a poster? I know I'd buy one! Thanks for listening, and may the Force be with us!

HERMAN TORRES Mayfield, KY

I love that cover illustration too, Herman.

There are no plans to turn either our exclusive *Simpsons/Star Wars* cover or the Kids-R-U's "Bart Wars" T-shirt design, which we featured, into posters. But that's not to say there's anything keeping you from cutting the illustrations out of your *Insider* and taping them to your wall, direct from the magazine, is there? Of course not — cut loose, go for it! As for a re-release of the *Star Wars* Trilogy Special Edition in 1999, there are also no plans for that, either. It is a good idea though, you ask me...

Go Figure

My name is Armando. I'm 28 years old, and I'm a collector since 1977. I live in Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico (the Maya's land). In 1977, when I became a collector, it was very hard because the only places to get items were in the U.S.A. Now, I'm one of the few real fans and collectors of *Star Wars* in Mexico. I have approximately 300 items, many Kenner figures, and also many photographs that I took and made with the toys by myself, because I'm a professional photographer.

In this letter, I'm sending many of my photographs. It would be an honor to me if you could publish one in your magazine. Here where I live, I've done many exhibitions in public places with my photographs. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

ARMANDO M. GUTIERREZ
Mérida, Mexico

The release of the trilogy *Special Edition* motivated us to fulfill our childhood dreams — we commenced making a small version of Mos Eisley Spaceport, Dune Sea, and the Jundland Waste. After months of construction, we were able to enjoy our own version of Tatooine. We as *Star Wars* fans fully enjoy and respect your magazine, which continues to cover our *Star Wars* passion. We hope you enjoy these photos of our artistic rendition. We are also currently constructing Jabba's palace.

JAY WEBER, NATE ANNEN,
JASON MARTIN
Hobart, Indiana

I love getting Star Wars art from fans — you should see my office walls. I thought Armando's photos (on page 79) were cool because he managed to capture his action figures as if they were living models, and I was fascinated by the miniature (yet seemingly vast) world of Tatooine created by Jay, Nate & Jason (pages 80-81). What do you think?

I would like to know why it seems like **most of the things in the INSIDER** always tend to lean toward the "light side."

—NATHAN DUNN, Greenwood, AR

Return of the Simpsons

I just got Issue 38, and I loved how you guys connected *The Simpsons* with *Star Wars*. Next to the trilogy, *The Simpsons* is my favorite. Before this issue was made, I caught every *Star Wars* moment on *The Simpsons*. On page 57, you give a complete list of *Star Wars*-related episodes, but you missed one. In one episode, Grampa Simpson falls in love with a woman named Bea (voiced by Audrey Meadows of *The Honeymooners*). She dies and leaves all her money to Grampa. Later in the episode, Grampa is giving away his money and there is a line of people waiting to tell their story of why they should get some. As the line is moving, we see a very well-known *Star Wars* character—Darth Vader himself.

MARK MAZZEO, Malden, MA

Right you are, Mark. The episode you're remembering is called "Old Money" and it originally aired March 28, 1991. Thanks for the eagle eyes!

Empire of the Dunn

Hey! First off, I'd like to say that I REALLY enjoy your magazine. You don't get any better info (and it's true, thank goodness) than the stuff in the *Insider*. It's a really great magazine that's always up to date with really great topics. Keep it up!

Now for my question: I would like to know

why it seems like most of the things in the *Insider* always tend to lean toward the "light side." I'm an avid *Star Wars* fan, but unlike some, I would like to know why people always like the good guys! For instance, I'm writing to Rebel Rumblings, not Imperial Rumblings. Rebel may sound better, but try to look at it from the Empire's P.O.V.—the bad guys think they're doing the right thing. That is, unless they were just doing it to be mean. Even if they were, they still kept order! It's the REBELS that stirred things up!!!

NATHAN DUNN, Greenwood, AR

Well Nathan, call me crazy, but somehow we didn't think we'd encourage much of a dialogue by naming our letters column after a totalitarian regime that waged war on the Jedi Knights, destroyed billions on the planet of Alderaan, and ruled the galaxy with fear and intimidation. Seriously, I agree that some of the best characters in the trilogy are the bad guys, but one of the things I've always admired about the Rebels is that, even though it meant disturbing "order," they stood up for what was right. Not that the bad guys aren't cool...

Write to: REBEL RUMBLINGS, P.O. Box 111000, Aurora, CO 80042. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations. The *Star Wars Insider* is not responsible for any unsolicited material received.

>> Prequel Profile

continued from page 16

One of the most innovative additions to the new R2-D2 is a pair of wheelchair motors "that can push 440 pounds, and for the most part he can go over anything now," Bies enthused.

To allow Bies greater dexterity when operating Artoo, a tiny camera was installed inside the droid to allow Bies to get a first-hand view of what Artoo would be seeing. "We put a little camera inside of Artoo so I could actually operate him from his point of view if I needed to," said Bies. "That came in handy if we shot in a small, confined set where I couldn't get to see him."

Bies admitted his options are limited when it comes expressing Artoo's distinctive personality. "I do try to give him some life when I'm operating," he said. "However, I can't do a whole lot. I remember we worked on a commercial one time that Artoo was in. The director wanted Artoo to look happy. Well, Artoo only turns his head and rolls back and forth. I don't know what I did, but Artoo looked happy."

In addition to operating the droid, Bies also had the enviable job of organizing Lucasfilm's archives at Skywalker Ranch in San Rafael, California, from 1988 to 1996. He has also worked on creature, puppet, and model effects for such films as *Flubber*, *Starship Troopers*, *Congo*, *Ghostbusters II*, *The Fly* and its sequel, and George Lucas' *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.

But Bies' first love is clearly R2-D2. In fact, Bies was so blown away by the first *Star Wars* movie in 1977 that he built his own Artoo. "When *Star Wars* came out," he recalled, "I was 16 years old and I built my own Artoo, a full-size radio-controlled unit. Flash-forward a few years down the line, and I was working in the film business in California. I met a guy that operated R2-D2 for personal appearances and as it turned out, about a year later, he left to go work for another company and the job became open. So 11 years ago, I was hired to operate R2-D2—and now here I am operating for this film."

Bies said he built his homemade R2-D2 for only about \$500—as opposed to a much higher figure for a new Artoo model. So why didn't he save Lucasfilm a few bucks on Episode I and use the R2-D2 he built as a teenager? "Unfortunately," Bies said, "my parents moved out of the house that they lived in for the past 40 years and where Artoo once resided, and I told them to get rid of him. It was time to move on." ☺



the last page



This final page artwork by Monrovia artist Russ Kaiser kicks off a series of Star Wars art projects. The last page of the magazine. If you've got an idea for this page, or would like to submit your own work, write to: "LAST PAGE," c/o Star Wars Insider, P.O. Box 111001, Aurora, CO 80042, for submission guidelines. DO NOT SEND ARTWORK WITHOUT GETTING GUIDELINES FROM US FIRST.

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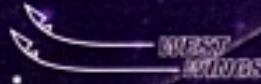
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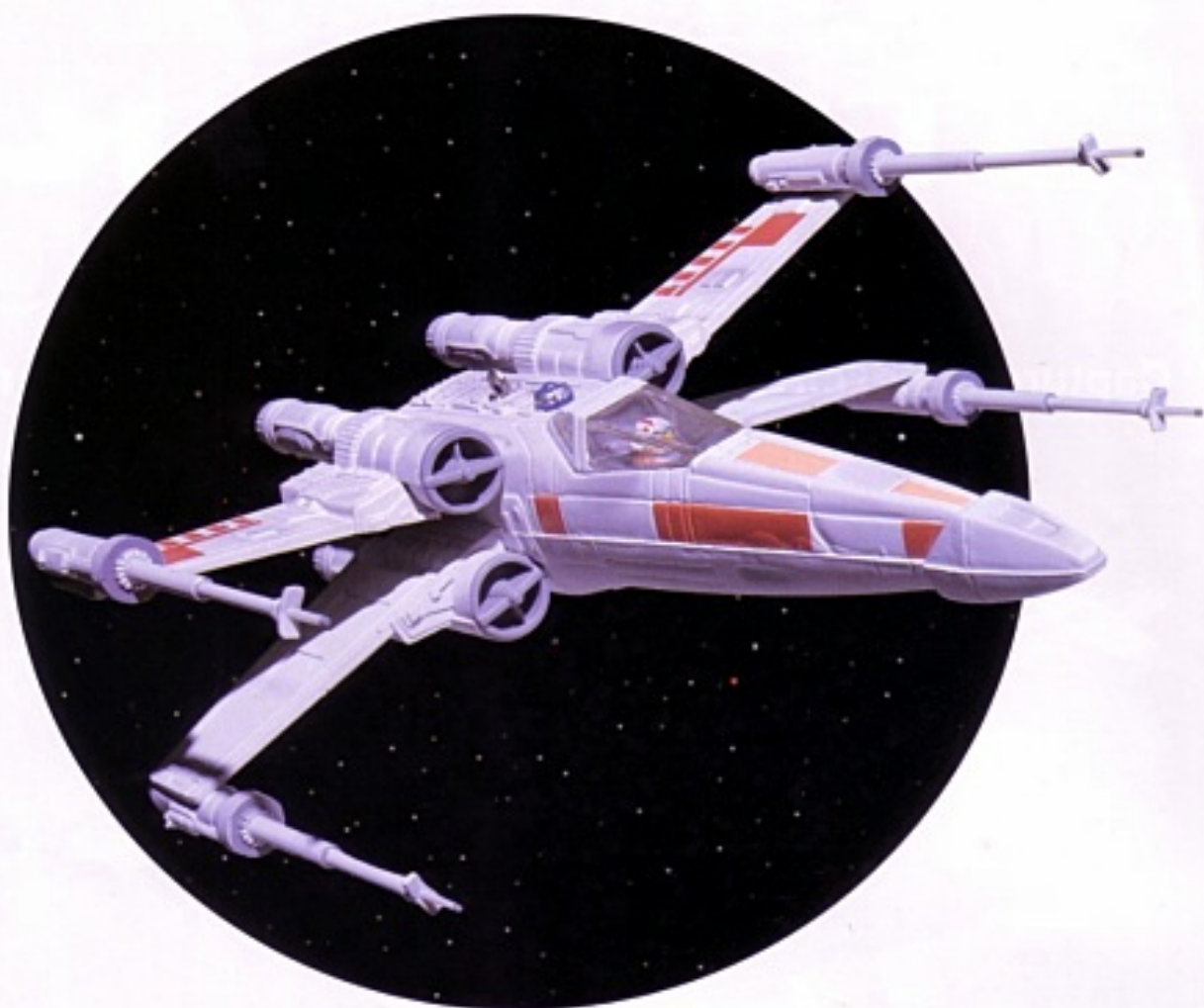
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